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IN the following "sketches" particular stress has been laid upon the element of *practical instruction.* Sermon books in which moral and dogmatic themes are made the ground for an appeal to sentiment abound in our language.

We have, therefore, preferred to confine ourselves to giving the framework of short homilies, capable of elaboration, which explain and illustrate the belief and practices of our holy Faith. The need of supplying instruction about the fundamental facts of the Catholic religion exists more than ever, since it is evident that large numbers of those who have been educated in irreligious schools, are drifting away from the fervor of faith which characterized their Catholic parents. It is to be hoped that this fervor may in time revive through the efforts of a zealous parochial clergy to introduce everywhere, and to render thoroughly efficient, the Catholic parish-school.

In making up the following sketches we have availed ourselves of the two excellent books, which every priest will find it to his advantage to possess, namely, Father Bromley Crane's little work, "Facts of Faith" (Leamington: Art and Book Company) and Father Kenelm Vaughan's "Divine Armory of Holy Scripture" (Catholic Book Exchange, New York). For the illustrations and examples we are mainly indebted to Father Maas' Life of Our Lord according to the Gospel History, and to J. Schmid's *Historischer Katechismus*' which latter work we believe is out of print.

HOMILETIC REVIEW.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Rom. VI, 19-23.
Gosp. Matt. VII, 15-21.

Subject.—*The Wages of Death.*

Text.—*For the Wages of Sin is Death.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—Our Lord uses the example of a tree to point out the ways of men who sin in secret, having the outward appearance of being good and honorable.

When a worm gnaws at the root of a tree it may live on for a long time, but gradually decaying and, unless the soil be renewed and the reptile removed, sure to die in time. But there are beasts that can destroy a tree at once, so that it withers in a day and is hopelessly dead, fit only to be cast into the fire.

Transition.—It is so with man. There are sins that gradually corrupt his nature and eat away his life of grace, unless the searching eye of a good confessor points out the evil and teaches us to keep the soil of the soul fresh by daily religious practice. This is habitual venial sin.

But there are other sins which, like a sharp-toothed hyena, destroy the life of the soul at once, so that nothing but the wonderful grace of God through the Sacrament of penance can restore it to life. That is mortal sin, the wages of which is death, because it destroys the life of the soul.

Let us briefly examine

I. The character of mortal sin ;

II. Its consequences here and in eternity, and,

III. The conditions necessary for its removal.

First Point.—A sin which deprives the soul of sanctifying grace is a grievous offence against the divine Majesty. For the commission of such a sin supposes three things :

a. That the act we do be in itself a *grave* and important *matter*, such as would injure the honor of God or the rights of our neighbor or our own eternal interests, like murder, idolatry, impurity, serious theft.

b. It is also necessary that *we have a knowledge and advertence* at the time when the act is committed, that it is a thing of great importance and grievously wrong. A man who kills another by mistake is not guilty of mortal sin, for though the act is of a serious nature, yet the one who committed it did not know what he was doing, or did not advert to it.

c. Finally, a sin to be mortal must be committed with the full and *perfect consent of the will* to do it. You may be forced to carry away a sum of money which you know is stolen, yet if you resist, though in vain, you are not guilty of mortal sin. For although the act is a grievous offence, and although you know perfectly what you are doing, yet as your will does not consent to the act, there is no grievous offence.

Second Point.—The effect of a transgression in a serious matter, done with perfect knowledge of the wrong involved, and with a full consent of the will, is to deaden the organs of divine grace.

When a man turns away from God, consciously and deliberately, to satisfy his spite or his lust or his pride, he becomes like Cain after he had slain his brother. His mind is restless, his conscience breeds remorse. In the hope of forgetting the end, which is sure to come upon him, he seeks

by pleasures and enjoyments to drown the voice of God calling him to account.

That end is death—death with all its miserable *antecedents* of decaying health, distaste for the pleasures that once excited all the passions, disappointments of the world's friendship, which has no use for the sick or the old when it has ruined them.

And after death, what a sad spectacle of the loss of God, of every joy, of every hope and grace, once so generously held out to the youth and maiden ere they had bartered the purity of their hearts for the momentary enjoyments of earthly pleasure. If men, who have come to ruin, find it often impossible to endure the life to which the creature clings by the very law of self-preservation, and seek in consequence vain relief in suicide, what must it be in the darkness of utter abandonment and torture of conscience in hell.

Thy own wickedness, says Jeremias, *shall reprove thee. Know that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God* (Jer. ii, 19). *We have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us?* asks the wise man (Wisd. v, 7), in the name of the sinner.

Thus sin brings temporal and eternal punishment upon him who has given himself to its commission.

Third Point.—But *the mercies of the Lord are above all His works.* Not as if man could sin with impunity, making the mercy of God a cloak and an excuse for continuing his evil way until the end, but so that he turn to the Lord in sorrow, and receive from Him a new and miraculous life of the soul dead in sin. *Let the wicked*, says Isaias, *forsake his way and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord and He will have mercy on him: and to our God, for He is bountiful to forgive.* (Is. lv, 7.) And the Lord promises the sinner new life if he hearkens to His admonition. *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am*

the Lord; and they shall be my people and I will be their God, because they shall return to me with their whole heart. (Jer. xxiv, 7.) *Is it my will that a sinner should die, says the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live?* (Ezech. xviii, 23.)

Conclusion.—Fly then from that conscious and deliberate transgression of the divine law which poisons your soul and saps its life; for *the wages of sin is death*, as the Lord has said. And if you have been so unfortunate as to fall into mortal sin, then make every effort to rise from your benumbed state, as you do from a nightmare of death which oppresses you. Turn your eyes toward the Lord crying for mercy. *Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O House of Israel? I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: return ye and live.* (Ezech. xxvii, 31.) Amen.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Rom. VIII. 12-17.
Gosp. Luke XVI, 1-9.

Subject.—*Almsgiving.*

Text.—*Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.*—(Gospel.)

Introduction.—The meaning of these words used by our Lord in the Gospel is, that we should make use of money, which is ordinarily the mammon of iniquity, for the purpose of gaining the friendship of God's poor, so that His blessing,

obtained through charity toward our brother, may secure for us an everlasting dwelling in heaven.

Money has indeed its legitimate uses for covering our personal and present necessities. In some cases prudence, approved of by God, obliges us even to provide against future want by moderate saving. But the principal use of money, as of all other created objects, is to serve man to attain his last end, that is to say, to save his soul.

Transition.—This object is attained by charity toward God and our neighbor; and one of the most direct means of proving this charity, which contains in itself the whole law is almsgiving.

We shall briefly consider:

I. The duty of almsgiving,

a. The giving without invidious distinction;

b. Silently;

c. Joyfully.

II. The fruits of almsgiving, which are

a. Blessings in soul and body;

b. Remission of sin and its penalty.

First Point.—

a. The duty of almsgiving is indicated on nearly every page of Holy Writ. Hear how the venerable Tobias instructs his son: *Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee.* (Tob. iv, 7.) And again: *Eat thy bread with the hungry and the needy, and with thy garments cover the naked.* (Tob. iv, 17.)

b. We should not be anxious to have our charities heralded about, as is the custom with the world. *When thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.—But when*

thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand does—that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee. (Matt. vi, 2–4.)

c. But it would be a grievous error to bestow a charity with reluctance, and to detract from its worth by giving it with a frown or a reproach. *Make thyself affable to the congregation of the poor* says Ecclesiasticus (iv,7). *When thou givest anything, add not grief by an evil word.* (Ibid. xviii, 16.) God loveth the cheerful giver.

Second Point.—

a. It has often been remarked that men who are generous to the poor, never come to grief of want or poverty. The royal Psalmist said of one who bestows his alms: *Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor; the Lord preserve him and give him life, and make him blessed upon earth, and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies.—The Lord help him on his bed of sorrow.* (Ps. xi, 1-3.) This passage well expresses the manifold blessings of a temporal nature which accompany a generous heart.

b. What is true of the temporal order, is still more emphatically true in the spiritual life. We all know the inspired saying that *charity covereth a multitude of sins.* This truth is variously expressed in the Sacred Text. *By mercy and truth*, says the Wise Man, *iniquity is redeemed.* (Prov. xvi, 6), and again: *The ransom of man's life are his riches.* (Ibid. xiii, 8.)

Conclusion.—Mindful of the truth that *He who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings*, (II. Cor. ix, 6,) let us make such use of whatever means God has placed within our reach, that they may pay off our debt with the eternal Judge, and purchase for us the blessed habitation prepared for us in heaven. Amen.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. I Cor. X, 6-13.
Gosp. Luke XIX, 41-47.

Subject.—*The tears of Jesus.*

Text.—*Seeing the city He wept over it.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—There are tears of sorrow and tears of joy. Both indicate, as a rule, some strong emotion of the heart.

Transition.—In a few instances the Evangelist records of our Lord that He wept. Once, when He saw the grief of Martha and Mary, over the death of their brother Lazarus. Then His tears were the expression of compassionate love. Again, He weeps over the city of Jerusalem, and in the garden of Olives. They were tears of sorrow over the sins of men and their perverse refusal to profit by His benevolent call. The tears of Jesus are

I. A proof of His affection for us;

II. A touching warning to profit by the admonition which they imply.

First Point--Nothing so convinces us of the sincerity of another as tears. They speak silently, yet their eloquence is more persuasive than the most earnest speech. In man, they are either indicative of a deep sense of personal loss or inability to express our gratitude, or else they imply intense sorrow for some fault or sin.

In Christ, the God-man, they can be neither one or the other. They simply speak of His affection for man, of His longing for his salvation. *I have a baptism*, He says, *wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.* (Luke xii, 50.)

This love our Lord has proved to us in His most bitter passion; in the thousand ways in which He has guarded us thus far from eternal loss of our souls; in the ever renewed knockings at the door of our heart, to make us return and follow in His path.

Second Point.—This pleading of our divine Master should not leave us unmoved.

a. We can sorrow with Him.
b. We can make reparation for the ingratitude shown Him.

Both ways will help to avert from ourselves and thousands of our brethren the sad fate of destruction, foretold and fulfilled in Jerusalem, but foretold likewise, and to be fulfilled in each one who lends not an open ear to the warning of Christ: *The days shall come upon thee and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee—because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.* (Gospel.)

Conclusion.—To mourn and weep, rather than to laugh and rejoice, is the vocation of men in this valley of tears. We are not told that our Lord laughed at any time. But He wept, and He recommended tears as a means of attaining heavenly peace: *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* (Matt. v., 5.) Be content in sorrow. Temper excessive joys of life with the thought that it is a journey of the cross. Amen.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. I, Cor. XII, 2-11.
Gosp. Luke, XVIII, 9-14.

Subject.—*Proper support of the Church.*

Text.—*I give tithes of all I possess.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—In the old law it was ordained that every Hebrew should give a certain portion of his yearly income to the support of the Temple and its service. *Tithes*, or the tenth part, *of the land, whether of corn or the fruits of the*

trees, are the Lord's and are sanctified to Him. So reads the Law of Leviticus (xxvii, 30.) It was at once an acknowledgement to the Lord that all man possessed came from and ultimately belonged to God, and it also furnished the needful means to provide a proper service for the divine worship.

Transition.—A similar law in the Christian Church provides for the maintenance of the House of God and its ministers. This is expressed in the last of the precepts of the Church obliging us *to contribute to the support of the clergy and the maintenance of religion.* For St. Paul expressly writes to the Corinthians: *The Lord has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel.* (I Cor. ix, 14.) As to this support it should be given

I. Conscientiously according to each one's ability;
II. Cheerfully and regularly.

First Point.—All that we have comes to us from Almighty God. It is therefore not only just that we should acknowledge this source of all goodness, by a return to Him in sacrifice part of that which we owe to His mercy, but it is likewise prudent, that we do so in order to keep God's blessing upon us in the future. *Bring all the tithes unto the storehouse,—and try me in this, saith the Lord: If I open not unto you the flood-gates of heaven, and pour you out a blessing even to abundance.* (Malach. iii, 10.)

What we give to the Lord with a pure heart and good intention of pleasing Him, will therefore come back to us a hundredfold. But we should offer Him generously, according to His generosity toward us. It was for this reason that the Law ordained not a definite sum for every Hebrew, but the tenth part of every man's yearly income. We are told that *Abraham gave Melchisedech the tithes of all,* (Gen. xiv, 20), and Moses strongly insists that *All the things which you offer of the tithes and shall separate for the gifts of the Lord, shall be the best and choicest things.* (Num. xviii, 29.)

Second Point—An honest and spontaneous offering made, not because your pastor urges it upon you but because you owe it to God from whom we have all good things, implies that we give cheerfully and regularly the portion belonging to the Church.

Moses forbade under gravest penalty that any one should bring to the Lord an offering which was not perfect. A maimed lamb or a sick animal was not acceptable for the temple sacrifice. *If you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it to thy prince, if he will be pleased with it, or if he will regard thy face, saith the Lord of Hosts. Cursed is the deceitful man, that, making a vow, offereth in sacrifice that which is feeble to the Lord: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is fearful among the Gentiles.* (Malach. i, 8, 14.)

Conclusion.—Be exact and conscientious in this matter of paying your dues to the support of the Church. Purify your motives, and on all occasions when you contribute to any good cause in the House of God, or for its maintenance, say to yourself: I wish to give this to God with all my heart, because all I have comes from Him, and all I may hope for lies with His infinite mercy. Amen.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. I, Cor. xv, 1-10.
Gosp. Mark vii, 31-37.

Subject.—*The Ceremonies of Baptism.*

Text.—*Taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into His ears, and spitting He touched His tongue; and looking up to heaven He groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, be thou opened.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Although our Lord could have cured the deaf and dumb man spoken of in to-day's Gospel, by a single act of His holy will, without word or even sign, we notice that He performs certain acts which to many a bystander, and perhaps to some readers of the Gospel, seem strange and unmeaning.

Transition.—The Church has introduced these same acts of our Lord on this occasion, into her ritual for the ceremonies accompanying Baptism. And as many, looking upon the new born child as it is solemnly enrolled into the Christian ranks, ask themselves what is the meaning and reason of these ceremonies, we shall briefly consider the sense and origin of at least the principal acts during the administration of this sacrament; for these signs are not merely symbolical or arbitrary, but they have a distinct warrant in Holy Scripture, and a deep significance. They are

I. The breathing;
II. The salt;
III. The exorcisms;
IV. The holy oils;
V. The white garment:
VI. The lighted torch.

First Point.—When God created man, He formed his soul in him by breathing upon his body: *And He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.* (Gen. i, 7.) When the second creation of man takes place, in his regeneration from death by sin to the life of grace, the priest breathes upon the child, as God breathed upon Adam, and as our Lord breathed upon His disciples. (John xx, 22.)

Second Point.—The old law ordained that with every sacrifice to the Lord, salt, which signifies wisdom and preservation from corruption of sin, should be brought to the

temple. *Whatsoever sacrifice thou offerest, thou shalt season it with salt.* (See Levit. ii, 13 for the rest.)

It expresses the grace which endows the soul with divine insight (gifts of the Holy Ghost), and the power to resist temptation.

Third Point.—Man is under the dominion of Satan by his very inheritance of original sin, or by his conception in sin. Christ gave to His ministers the power to deliver man from this possession of the demon. *He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out.* (Matt. x, 1.) This power is exercised by priests when they administer the Sacrament of Baptism.

Fourth Point.—(Read Exod. xxx, 22, 23 for example in the Old Testament of the ordinance of Holy Chrism.) The sanctifying power of this oil is shown in the words of Jehovah who ordained in Leviticus, as follows: *Thou shalt consecrate all with the oil of Unction that they may be most holy.* (Lev. xl, 11.) The holy oils signify strength of virtue and holiness.

Fifth Point.—The white garment is indicative of innocence and victory over the darkness of sin: *He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life; and I will confess his name before my Father, and before His Angels.* (Apoc. iii, 4, 5.)

Sixth Point.—The symbol of the lighted torch expresses the duty of the Christian to serve as a source of edification and enlightenment to others. Christ calls Himself the *Light of the world;* but He wishes us also to be children of the light. *While you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may be the children of Light.* (St. John xii, 36.) (See Isaias xl, 7, on the duty of enlightening others who sit in the shadow of death without faith.)

Conclusion.—Reverently follow the ceremonies of baptism. Recall their meaning and the obligations to which you were pledged in receiving solemn baptism in the Catholic Church. (Suggest the importance of having the ceremonies supplied where a child has been baptized at home on account of danger of death.) Amen.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. II Cor. III, 4-9.
Gosp. Luke X, 23-37.

Subject.—*Extreme Unction.*

Text.—*Going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The action of the good Samaritan is indicative of that of the Church in administering the Sacrament of Extreme Unction to her children in danger of death.

St. Mark tells us that the Apostles received from our Lord instruction to go forth and preach, and that they did so, and that *they anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.* (St. Marc. vi, 12.) Our Lord had then evidently instituted the Sacrament of Extreme Unction: to which St. James refers more explicitly in his Epistle (v, 14, 15), when he says: *Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

Transition.—I propose then to take up the subject of Extreme Unction, and, as the matter is of great importance, and should be treated in its entirety, we shall have to divide it into three parts, considering for the present:

I. Who properly administers this sacrament;
II. Who may receive it.

On the two following Sundays we shall inquire, first, *when* and *how* to receive it, and secondly, what are the salutary *effects* of it upon the individual who receives it rightly.

First Point—The mission to administer the Sacraments of the Catholic Church was given by Christ to rightly ordained priests, and not to elders or seniors among the laity, as has been maintained by some teachers of sectarianism.

The priest in anointing the sick person pronounces the form prescribed in the Ritual of the Church: By this holy unction, and His own tender mercy, may the Lord forgive thee whatever thou hast done amiss by the sense of sight, hearing, smell, taste and speech, touch or step.

He makes the sign of the cross upon the different sense organs with pure oil of olives blessed for that purpose by the bishop on Holy Thursday.

When the patient is in danger of immediate death, the anointing takes place on the forehead with a shorter form.

(Explain the beautiful prayers of the Ritual recited by the priest before and after administering extreme unction.)

Second Point.—This Sacrament is only for those who have sinned, and are sick unto death, that is, *in danger of death through sickness or old age.*

It is never given to infants or persons who approach death in full health, such as soldiers in battle, travellers on a dangerous voyage, or men condemned to death—for it is a sacrament *for the sick only*, who may be in sin. Persons who are stunned, delirious, or rendered senseless by some accident, likewise receive this sacrament so long as there is a reasonable presumption that they desire to die in a state of repentance.

Conclusion.—(Explain the necessity of calling the priest for the administration of the sacrament in the above mentioned cases.) Amen.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Gal. III, 16-22.
Gosp. Luke XVII, 11-19.

Subject.—*When and How to receive Extreme Unction.*

Text.—*Go show yourselves to the priests.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—We saw last Sunday who is the rightful minister of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and who are properly the subjects to whom it is given.

Transition.—To-day we shall briefly inquire

I. At what time this sacrament should be received;
II. How we are to prepare ourselves for it.

First Point.—Whenever a Catholic is taken seriously ill, and the physician pronounces the sickness as probably dangerous, the priest should be called.

There should be no needless delay in such cases, because it is very important

a. That the patient receive the sacrament whilst still in the full possession of his senses. He can thus prepare better for its worthy reception, and by his conscious co-operation bring its grace more fully to act on his soul.

b. Moreover the Sacrament of Extreme Unction has a special grace attached to it, which makes it act upon the body as a physical remedy. By allowing the system to become so weak that this remedy does not affect it, we deprive the patient of one of the principal results intended to be wrought by this sacrament.

Second Point.—The preparation required for Extreme Unction is the state of contrition.

a. Confession and Holy Vaticum.

b. Prayer.

Conclusion.—Be anxious to procure the grace of Extreme Unction for others as well as for yourself.

Help the dying to prepare properly for it.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Gal. V, 16-24.
Gosp. Matt. VI, 24-33.

Subject.—*The Effects of Extreme Unction.*

Text.—*All these things shall be added unto you.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The primary object of the institution of the Sacraments of the Catholic Church is to come to the aid of weak and fallen man, and to supply him with certain graces needed by him in various conditions of life.

Transition.—The purpose of Extreme Unction is to help man, when, broken and infirm, and at the gate of death, he is in danger of despair, and requires the strength either to pass over the narrow bridge that leads him to eternity, or else to retrace his steps and in, the new strength of a life prolonged by special grace, to gather merit sufficient to gain the kingdom of heaven.

The effects then of this sacrament may be summed up in three points :

I. Remission of sin and its temporal punishment.
II. Peace of soul and strength to combat temptation ;
III. Alleviation of bodily sickness.

First Point.—Ordinarily the sick who are to receive Extreme Unction make a good confession before it. But there are cases not a few, when the body is so enfeebled, and the mind so wandering amid the stress of pain and fear, that the examination requisite for a good confession is practically impossible.

Should a person be unable to confess his grievous sins by word or sign, or be wholly unconscious of his dreadful state, yet, if he have sorrow in his heart, the reception of Extreme Unction would apply to him the Precious Blood of our Lord and wipe out all his sins. Such is the first effect of this blessed Sacrament.

Second Point.—In the second place, it soothes the soul. You have heard the prayers which the priest recites when administering the Extreme Unction. In them he beseeches God that He would banish all fear and anxiety, all thoughts of despair or spiritual indifference from the heart of the sick person. There are peculiar temptations in the face of death, to which the weak sufferer is easily disposed to yield, when the soul and body are afflicted with pain and weariness. It is against the power of the demons making their last desperate efforts that this sacrament fortifies the sick.

Third Point.—Finally, this sacrament has the power of raising up the sick man and restoring him to health, so far as God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, deems good for the safer assurance of his salvation. Such is the interpretation of the words of St. James, that *the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up*, as given by the authoritative teaching of our holy Church.

Conclusion.—(Exhortation to pray that we may not die deprived of this great sacrament with all its beneficent effects.) Amen.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Gal. V, 25—VI, 10.
Gosp. Luke VII, 11-16.

Subject.—*Death.*

Text.—*Behold a dead man was carried out.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The incident at the gate of the city of Naim recalls to our mind the hour of death which infallibly awaits each of us in turn. Since Adam's fall it has become the certain lot of all the human race.

Transition.—Since then there can be no doubt that the awful hour, which is followed by an immediate judgment before the all-seeing God, will come upon us too, what hesitation can we have in closely examining our state of readiness for it, since

I. Nothing can avert it; although
II. A devout preparation will lessen its terrors.

First Point.—The care to protect health, the wise foretellings of the probable length of an individual life, are daily defeated by sudden and unprovided deaths. *The days of man are short and the number of his months is with Thee; O Lord, Thou hast appointed his bounds which cannot be passed.* So spoke Job (xiv, 5). The wisest of men, Solomon, who had investigated all things on earth and above, that were in the reach of human knowledge, says: *It is not in man's power to stop the spirit, nor hath he power in the day of death.* (Eccl. viii, 8.)

Death is certain. No device of man can keep it off. The time is uncertain. Daily experience proves that no condition in life permits of absolutely safe calculation as to the enjoyment of the succeeding hour.

Second Point.—As death is the preamble to judgment, and as our whole eternity depends on the issue of that judgment, a wise man will arrange all his affairs as he would wish to have them at the hour of death and in the light of eternity.

A good life, even late begun, is a sure antidote against the terrors of death, for *the souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them.* (Wisd. iii, 1.) Of him it can be said that *he pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners he was translated.* (Ibid. iv, 13.)

Conclusion.—Keep in all your important actions the thought before you, that you will surely die, perchance ere

the act is accomplished. Regulate it therefore in such a manner, that it may improve your merit with the eternal Judge, for of all of us it is said that *their works follow them* in death. Amen.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Ephes. III, 13-21.
Gosp. Luke XIV, 1-11.

Subject.—*In the Banquet Hall on the Sabbath.*

Text.—*Jesus went into the house of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath-day to eat bread.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The Gospel just read pictures our Lord in the house of a chief of the Pharisees. It is a Sabbath-day in January during the last year of the public life of our divine Saviour. A man afflicted with the painful and hopeless disease of the dropsy presents himself at the entrance and appeals to Jesus to bless and to relieve him of his suffering. Our Lord heals the man and dismisses him. Then, looking at the guests at table, who did not like His kindness toward the poor, He points out to them the hidden disease of the heart, which shows itself in the eagerness for human glory, and in human pride seeking the first place at the honored guest board.

Transition.—We too gather each Sabbath-day in the church, where our Lord meets us as the heavenly Host. Here at the Communion table He dispenses His favors. Some of us come into His presence afflicted with the ills of the body and the troubles of life; others come with hearts warped by the withering touch of sin—vanity, sensuality, pride and envy. For both our Lord has a remedy. To the suffering

who sincerely seek His help He gives relief, and often a wonderful peace of heart. To those who are in sin He points out their state of soul, sometimes by the teaching of the holy Gospels and the word of the preacher, sometimes by a silent grace that brings them to know themselves in a single moment, and to turn toward the confessional with a firm resolve to lead a better life.

Such are the effects of the presence of our divine Lord in the Tabernacle, here, in this banquet hall of His Church; and it is on this two-fold fruit of the Blessed Sacrament that we shall briefly dwell to-day.

First Point.—The Blessed Sacrament *relieves us of our bodily infirmities*—either

a. By curing them; or

b. By giving us strength to bear them, when they are necessary or greatly helpful to our sanctification.

c. We see our divine Master, in to-day's Gospel, coming to the aid of the poor man afflicted with the dropsy, because, no doubt, the sufferer most earnestly besought Him and gave sincere promise that he would use his restored limbs for the honor of his Creator and Saviour, and the salvation of his own soul.

We believe and know that the same Lord dwells here in His sacred Body, soul and divinity, under the humble appearances of bread and wine. This is our holy faith. True, our bodily eyes do not recognize the Lord in this disguise; but neither did the Pharisees see the true Son of God in the simple human form of the visitor in the banquet hall of the Pharisee's house. Those who do not believe His presence under the Eucharistic species to-day, would not believe His presence, if He came again in form of a man, and wrought the miracles He did in Palestine before an unbelieving multitude.

But if we have honest faith in the power and goodness of this our hidden Lord, then we may with confidence ask Him to relieve us of our ills, as He did the

man sick of the dropsy. And if our motive be sincere and we are prepared to avoid sin and use our strength rightly, then He will surely listen to our prayer, and the blessing which we receive from the Sacred Host at the elevation of Mass, will act upon us with the same wondrous power which effected the cure of multitudes who, when our divine Lord walked on earth in human form, lay by the roadside awaiting His passing by to receive the blessing of His uplifted hand, or to touch the hem of His sacred garment.

d. But God's designs are not always those which we consider best for our success or happiness. He Himself suffered, and He promised His disciples, whom He loved above all the rest of those who followed Him, that they also should have to suffer, in order that the seed, whence the flower and fruit of sanctity was to come, might first mortify and break asunder.

Hence He afflicts often those whom He loves most; for suffering rightly born begets grace and wonderful beauty of soul, such as we witness in the lives of saints. The father who wants to save the child that is in danger of being run over by a train, drags it rudely away, and perhaps punishes it afterwards, in order to keep it from going into such danger in future. Yet he loves that child. In the same manner, God afflicts us at times to keep us from greater and eternal harm.

Yet all the suffering in life cannot really hurt us, if we have asked and obtained the grace to bear it. (Cite the example of the martyrs.) *In your patience you shall find your soul*, says the Apostle. But patience is a gift which is dealt out here in the Church by the dear Master, who invites and awaits His children in the Tabernacle, saying: "*Come, all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I shall refresh you.*"

Second Point.—But there is a disease which afflicts the soul, and a disease all the more alarming because it goes to-

gether with bodily health, and is often not recognized by those who are suffering from it.

The Blessed Sacrament *cures the disease of the soul*

a. By making the sinner conscious of his wrong ;

b. By pointing out and drawing him into the way of reformation.

a. Great is the power of the most Blessed Sacrament over the heart of the sinner. You remember, my brethren, how when St. Peter had denied his Master on the night of Holy Thursday, a single look from the loving, reproachful eye of our Lord, made the Apostle burst into tears and change his life into a sacrifice for Christ.—Well, the same Lord and Master looks here upon us who assemble around Him at Mass and Benediction, and when the uplifted Host turns upon a heart blinded by sin, the light from the mild hidden eye of the Saviour often pierces the dark cover of the soul and makes the sinner conscious of his ingratitude. There are many cases in which persons, even strangers to our holy faith, who came into the church, were suddenly converted when they gazed upon the Sacred Host.

b. And as our Lord reveals Himself and enlightens the darkness of the soul by the grace of the Real Presence here in the tabernacle, so He also draws the enlightened and converted sinner closer unto Himself and teaches him the way of life.

The lesson which Christ taught the guests assembled around the table in the Pharisee's house, was one of humility and brotherly love. They were not to seek the first places at the banquet, but rather to be considerate of one another, choosing for themselves the last places. In the same way we find our Lord teaching us here in the humble home of His tabernacle the grand lesson of humility, retirement, modesty, and endurance. Day by day men insult Him, His own children ignore Him, and some even approach His sacred table to betray Him. God might strike the offenders dead, as He struck the Israelite Oza, who was forgetful of the reverence due to the Ark of the Covenant ; yet His love makes Him bear with the sinner, offering him pardon and grace with wondrous

longanimity, if only he will come and make use of the strength that issues from the hidden manna of the Blessed Sacrament.

Conclusion.—What else can we conclude, from the thoughts of our having free access to the same banquet hall with our divine Lord, who heals and enlightens those who come into His presence, than that we be careful to avail ourselves of this great privilege. Whence resolve upon

a. Regularity at Mass on Sundays and holy-days;

b. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament as frequent as our time permits, not only on Sundays but on weekdays.

c. Receiving the sacred banquet in more frequent Holy Communion; and, when not able to do this, to make at least spiritual Communion.

And on all these occasions present to the Lord your ills and troubles of life; when He rebukes you for your own good, receive the admonition with docility and carry it out in your lives, humbling yourselves that you may be exalted (Gospel): be open hearted before your divine Master, *that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.* (Epistle.) Amen.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Eph. IV, 1-6.
Gosp. Matt. XXII, 35-46.

Subject.—*Practical Charity.*

Text.—*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The incident related in to-day's Gospel occurred on Tuesday in Holy Week. The Pharisees and Sadducees, learned men, doctors of the Law, had been disputing among themselves about some points of legal obliga-

tion; they appealed in turn to our Lord. But in doing so, they hoped not only to obtain His endorsement of their views, but also to arouse the enmity of the hostile party against our Saviour: for they were jealous of His popularity, and had already determined to put Him to death, if they could obtain any legal pretext for doing so.

Our Lord turns their malice back upon themselves, by reminding them that the law of charity is the foundation of all wisdom and right action; that the precept of divine love includes the love of our neighbor:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like to this:—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (Gospel.)

Transition.—From these words it is plain that charity is absolutely necessary for salvation. Let us briefly consider

I. What this two-fold precept of charity requires of us, in our relation

a. Toward God;
b. Toward ourselves; and
c. Toward our neighbor.

II. How we may foster in our hearts the growth of this charity, which is essential to our eternal salvation.

First Point.—The love of God consists in *a disposition of our will* by which we determine within ourselves that we will think and say and do that which pleases Him, and that we will endeavor to avoid whatsoever offends Him; at least in serious matters and where we plainly know His holy will.

It is *not merely a pious feeling* which moves us when some truth or religious act affects us and makes us for the moment devout; although such feelings greatly help the determination to do everything to please God.

a. Charity toward God means, therefore,

That we renounce all grievous sin, even at the risk of great temporal loss;

That we strive to avoid as much as possible even venial sin, because it lessens our chances of becoming as perfect as He wishes us to be;

That we seek to please Him, not only by avoiding all deliberate sin, but by doing such acts as will procure Him praise, adoration and honor; and also by inducing others by example and admonition to do the same.

b. Our Lord commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves. This implies that *we owe a certain charity to our own souls and bodies.*

Now the love of our own souls requires that we do everything in our power to save them from injury, and to increase our chances for heaven. Hence, when there is question of sacrificing an inclination or pleasure which may in any way become hurtful to our souls, we should never hesitate to choose that which is more profitable to eternal salvation. We cannot serve two masters. The soul is infinitely more precious than the body, for the latter will perish some day, whilst the former will endure.

But although we must sacrifice the comforts of our body when these become a danger to the life of our soul, yet we are also bound to honor and preserve the body, because it is an instrument and a vessel of the soul. A man who kills himself, or injures his body deliberately, does wrong, because that life does not belong to him but to God, who gave it for a proper use. It stands to reason then, that all excess which injures the body and is calculated to shorten life through mere self-indulgence, is a grievous wrong against the duty which we owe to ourselves, to love in a proper manner that body which God has given us, in order that we may use it to work out our salvation.

c. The love which we bear ourselves is to be shared

in a just measure with our neighbor. This includes all men and women, whether they be strangers, infidels, Catholics, good or bad, friends or enemies; for all these, like ourselves, are children of God, and bear His image, at least by creation; all have been redeemed by the Precious Blood of our Lord. *A new command I give unto you: that you love one another, as I have loved you.* (Gal. vi, 10.)

It is true there are those who have a special claim to our love, such as the members of our family, our kindred, benefactors, fellow-countrymen, and those who belong to the "household of the faith," but these special claims must not exclude anyone from that *practical* love which Christ commanded us to exercise towards all—

By wishing them well and praying for them;

By giving them help in need according to our ability;

By forgiving the injuries they may do us.

Second Point.—We naturally love that which we like and which appeals to our senses and affections; but the love of which Christ speaks does not depend on our likes or dislikes; it is, as has been said, a disposition of the will, not of the feelings.

Hence it is very important that we know the means to acquire this love, where it is wanting. We cannot easily love what we do not see; yet we are bound to love God whom we do not see. We cannot easily love men who are indifferent to us, or ungrateful, or hostile; yet we are bound to love our neighbor, good or bad, friend or foe, with the same indulgent and forgiving charity, which is a supernatural virtue.

In Baptism we receive the first germ of this virtue, which is a gift of God. We are to foster its growth until it ripens into a fruitful tree. This is done:

a. By praying for it—"O God, teach me to love Thee as I ought."

b. By frequently making the acts of charity which we learnt in our catechism.

c. By curbing all those inclinations which lead us away from the love of God, because we are sure that they displease Him.

d. By thinking and reading of God's great goodness as shown forth in the Sacred Scriptures or the Lives of the Saints.

Conclusion.—Everyone who is in earnest about his salvation, will bethink himself, whether he has the disposition required by the precept of charity toward God and his neighbor. It is a great grace to have the gift of supernatural charity, as we receive it through the sacraments, and there are daily in each life a hundred opportunities which call for its outward exercise. But there is also a way of weakening and deadening the germ of it in our hearts, by slander, and envy and hostilities. *Where envying and contention is*, says St. James (iii, 16), *there is inconstancy and every evil work.* Such conduct avoid, for it brings awful judgment with it. *A man that walketh with a perverse mouth, at all times soweth discord. To such a one his destruction shall presently come, and he shall suddenly be destroyed, and shall no longer have any remedy.* (Prov. vi, 12, 14, 15.) But let it be said of us what the Apostle said of the Corinthians: *We give thanks to God; hearing your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which you have toward all the faithful.* (Col. i, 4.) In this love of our brethren shall we find the hope of our own salvation, for *charity covereth a multitude of sins* (I. Pet. iv, 8), whilst *he that loveth not abideth in death.* (I John, iii, 14.) Amen.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. I. Cor. I. 4-8.
Gosp. Matt. IX, 1-8.

Subject.—*The Confessional in the Catholic Church.*

Text.—*Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Our Lord is in Capharnaum, the home which He had chosen during the first part of His public life. His great sanctity and the power of His preaching had already become known, and learned men came, as on this occasion, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem (Luke v, 17-26; Mark ii, 1-12), to hear and converse with him. But they did not know that He was the Son of God, and probably they would not have believed Him, had He told them at that time. Hence we need not be surprised that they took scandal when He said to the poor palsied man, lying on his bed, that his sins were forgiven him.

Transition.—Our Lord spoke the truth, for He was God, and could therefore forgive sin, even though He appeared in the form of a man like other men. When He returned to heaven at the Ascension, He wished the power which He had exercised upon the poor sinners for three years in Palestine, to remain on earth for the benefit of all ages, all peoples and every land to the end of time. Hence He bestowed it upon His disciples, and they were to transmit it in turn to others. It is this power of the Catholic priesthood to forgive sins in the name and by the commission of Christ, that I shall briefly explain to you to-day.

I. God had established the practice of forgiving sins through a human mediator.

II. This practice He wished to have continued in the world, which is actually and only done in the Catholic Church.

III. The utility of this practice is an evidence of its emanating from God, who gives us therein an easy and safe method of reforming our lives and saving our souls.

First Point.—God's will toward men has been made manifest in His revelation; that is to say, in the Sacred Scriptures, and especially in those of the New Testament, which contains the actions and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Both His actions and teaching show that He wished the power of forgiving sins to be exercised, not only in heaven, where the all-seeing eye of God judges and forgives, but in an especial and express manner upon earth.

Mark the words used by our Lord in to-day's Gospel, when He reproves the Pharisees who denied that man could have any such power on earth. He says to them: *That you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins*, and then He works a miracle to prove—not that God in heaven can forgive sins, for no one doubts this, but that the *Son of man* could, and wished to forgive sin *on earth.* And the people who saw it understood this truth, and were more willing to believe than the learned Scribes and Pharisees, for we are told that "the multitude seeing it feared and glorified God, *who had given such power to men.*" (Gospel.)

Second Point.—Christ did not deprive His faithful followers of this means when He returned to His eternal Father, but He left it to His Apostles and their successors.

On the day of His Resurrection, He said to those by whom His mission was to be continued: *As the Father has sent me, I also send you.* (St. John xx, 21.) Then, as if to emphasize in a particular manner this power of forgiving sins, the Evangelist adds: *And as He said this He breathed on them, and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained.* (St. John xx, 22, 23.)

Surely this can have no other meaning than that God has given to His Church in her rightly ordained and commissioned priests a judgment in the matter of sin, with power to forgive such as repent.

Third Point.—Men sometimes rail against the practice of confession, as if it were an injury to society and encouraged more sin than would otherwise be committed. But if we look at it reasonably and honestly, we see what a wonderful power for good it contains, if men only practised it with care and frequency, as the Church teaches.

In the institution of confession we recognize the infinite wisdom of God.

a. Confession is an act of humility, which naturally disposes the soul for sincere repentance.

b. It makes us ashamed of our sin, and thus deters us from it in future.

c. We realize our dependence and weakness, and feel more grateful toward our heavenly Father, who receives us back to His favor when we repent.

d. It gives us an opportunity of receiving instruction as to our needs, advice, encouragement in doing better. We are *cured* of our evil habits by being taught how to combat them, how to avoid temptation.

e. It acts beneficially upon society, not only by making the individual better, but by causing restitution of unjustly acquired goods, by averting scandals, by defeating plots and schemes of revenge, murder, and suicide.

Conclusion.—Thus the confessional brings blessings to the individual, the family, the community at large. The priest has upon his lips the seal of everlasting secrecy, sworn that he will die rather than reveal the slightest circumstance which has come to his knowledge in the confessional. And this law of the seal of confession is to insure the perfect confidence of the penitent in order that none of the benefits of this salutary institution may be lost.

Let us make right use of it, as God designs, and thus prove unto those who disbelieve in this divine institution, what a gain the confessional is for the true reformation of our lives and of society at large. Amen. (Reference to Ember week.)

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Eph. IV, 23-28.
Gosp. Matt. XXII, 2-14.

Subject.—*Wedding Cards.*

Text.—*The Kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who*

made a marriage for his son: and he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage. (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The Gospel offers an occasion to speak of the Sacrament of Matrimony, and in particular of the preparation to a union which, to be happy, must have the blessing of God upon it from its first beginning. It is a subject which concerns principally the young who have arrived at an age when they must seriously think of the state of life to which God has called each one; but it has its lessons for all of us, the old and the young, those who are married, as well as those who through necessity or choice lead a single life.

Transition.—It is the custom in these days, for persons who intend marriage, to send out wedding-cards. These cards indicate (*a*) that everything has been *prepared* for the nuptials; (*b*) *when* and *where* the celebration is to take place.

For the Christian who contemplates marriage these points expressed in the wedding card are of great and particular importance. He must look conscientiously to

I. The *Preparation*, which consists in

a. Having the necessary means and ability to *support a household;*

b. Making a careful *choice of a partner who suits our disposition* and general condition of life;

c. Possessing the *necessary instruction regarding the duties* of the married state;

d. *Purity of life* during the engagement;

e. A good Confession and Holy Communion before receiving the sacrament of marriage.

II. The *where* and *when* are

The church, if possible during the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the morning.

First Point.—

a. The young are at times lead to enter the marriage state through an impulse of mutual affection, and without

any thought of the future. This imprudence brings on misery and discontent, when in time the struggle for existence without any definite prospects of steady support cools the first love, and destroys, often for life, the peace of a home which, with some forethought and patience, might have become that of a happy family.

Much of the responsibility of young people entering hasty marriages rests with parents. It belongs to them to guard their children and to advise them in such an important step, just as it is the duty of a son or daughter to ask advice from their elders in a matter of which they can form no correct judgment. At an age when affection easily overmasters the reason of a boy or girl, they should be careful not to frequent each other's society alone. Parents are bound to protect their sons and daughters, who, when left to themselves, readily and thoughtlessly make profession and promises of attachment which they may live to regret.

b. (Point out the necessity of two persons who pledge themselves to live together until death, possessing the necessary qualifications of character, disposition, and education which fit them for each other.)

c. The married state is not merely a union of affection, but it is a holy union, ordained by God for the salvation of souls. As such it is subject to certain restrictions, and carries with it certain duties, of which those who wish to enter marriage must first inform themselves. Hence the necessity of *instruction regarding the impediments* which would make a marriage *unlawful* or *invalid*, unless the proper dispensation be first obtained.

For this reason, Catholics who have come to the conclusion that God has designed them as husband and wife, should present themselves from the very

first, and even before they have made any engagement, to their lawful pastor. They should consult him as to the duties of married life, which are grave and important, and frequently of lasting consequence in their future lives.

d. When they have assured themselves that they are guided by proper motives, and not by a blind affection merely, in their mutual choice, and that there is no hindrance on the part of God's law against their union, then the *engagement should be looked upon as sacred* in every sense. Let a man respect the woman he is to lead to the altar, and let not one become a temptation to the other, which brings a curse instead of a blessing upon their future married life.

(Explain the *Banns* of marriage.)

e. When finally the time of the engagement, which should not last too long, comes to a close, both bride and bridegroom should prepare themselves for the full and immediate reception of the sacramental grace imparted, through the blessing of the Church, upon their union. It is to be an eternal bond, and it is well to have it chastened and pure, like the golden ring that symbolizes it, on the wedding day.

Generally, it is advisable to make *two* confessions preparatory to the day of the marriage. *One*, a whole-souled survey of the past life, made *about a week before the wedding;* and another, just before receiving the sacrament of marriage. It will give you an opportunity for asking the confessor's advice in matters of your new state of life regarding which you have doubt.

Second Point.—On the morning of the marriage, let not your mind be too occupied with the arrangements of the feast, your appearance and the thousand vanities which crowd in upon the mind on such occasions. It is too im-

portant a day to waste on silly things of earth. Make all your preparations the day before, so that you may *devoutly receive the Blessed Eucharist during the Nuptial Mass*, and thus, with the blessings of God, commence your married life.

Conclusion.—Think of it, you who are looking ahead to the marriage day. *This is a great sacrament in Christ and in the Church.* (Eph. v, 32.) I say it especially to the young men: *A good wife is a good portion, she shall be given to them that fear God, to a man for his good deeds.* So says the Wise Man. (Ecclesiastic. xxvi, 3-4,) *Rich or poor, if his heart is good, his countenance shall be cheerful at all times.* (Ibid.) And you, parents, recall your compact before the Lord, and let your example of mutual peace and domestic happiness be an illustration of God's blessing, and a lesson to your children, lest by an imprudent or sinful union they bring shame and misery upon a life from which, once united, they can never lawfully be separated. Amen.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Ephes. V, 15-21.
Gosp. John VI, 46-53.

Subject.—*Helping the Dying.*

Text.—The ruler went to Jesus *and prayed Him to come down, and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—When we come to die, we shall wish that a great deal might be done for us which perhaps we never thought of during life. Charity obliges us to do now for others, what we would wish others to do for us, at a time when we will be entirely helpless. We should therefore imitate the ruler mentioned in to-day's Gospel, who was greatly solici-

tous about his dying son: for with the same measure with which we have measured unto others, shall it be measured unto ourselves, at the sad hour of death.

Transition.—When anyone is in danger of dying, our first thoughts are naturally to send for the priest, as well as for the physician, and to leave all things, apart from nursing, in their hands. There are, however, many things which we may do ourselves for the sufferer, and which are of the utmost importance to the dying person, inasmuch as they prepare the way if not for his recovery, certainly for a happy and tranquil death.

I shall briefly point out

I. *The particular duties we owe to the dying; and*

II. *The best method of accomplishing them.*

First Point.—Our first duty to a person who is really in danger of death, is

a. To inform him of it. This is to be done in all prudence, and according to the disposition of the patient, so that it may not increase the immediate danger by sudden fright. But it is cruelty, and a grievous sin, not to let him know the danger, or to flatter him with consciously false hopes, whatever a doctor may say to the contrary. A Catholic who knows the awful consequence of an unprovided death, does not want to be deceived in such matters, and at such a crisis, whatever be the temporary gain of a few hours longer of wretched or unconscious life. Ask, therefore, the physician to give you the true condition of the patient. If the danger is not immediate:

b. Advise him to settle his affairs. Making of a will.—Paying of debts.—Reconciliation with enemies, etc.

c. Send for the priest. Inform him of what the doctor has said; also of the present condition of the patient, whether he be conscious or in spasms, bleeding at the mouth or vomiting, as these may affect his receiving Holy Communion.

In the latter case, certain things should, as you know, be prepared for the *honorable treatment of the Holy Viaticum:* a table covered with white cloth, holy water, a crucifix and two blessed candles, an empty glass or cup, a pitcher filled with clean water, a small spoon, a clean towel and napkin; and for the Extreme Unction, some crumbs of fresh bread upon a plate.

d. Say short prayers for the dying, or have some friend or intelligent child do this. Acts of faith, hope, resignation, contrition, and devout ejaculations assist the poor sufferer much to dispose his soul and fix his attention upon his last end.

Second Point.—Besides these spiritual works of mercy, there are others which *concern the body*, but which are greatly helpful as a preparation for death, because they soothe the dying person, keep him from being irritated and impatient, or else prevent possible danger to those who surround the sick bed. They may be summed up in the following points:

a. Observe unvarying patience and kindness toward the sufferer;

b. Keep away from the sick such friends as come from mere idle curiosity, and who distract his mind by useless questions or ill-advised sympathy; likewise persons who may have a bad influence upon the dying, by their known evil lives, bad advice, etc.

c. Have a Crucifix or devout picture near the bed, so that the sick person can see it.

No less important are cleanliness, fresh air, comfortable position, regularity in administering food and medicine, because a neglect of these things might shorten the life, of which every moment becomes precious, in view of the last end for which the dying man is to prepare.

Conclusion.—In this way, my brethren, do we make preparation for our own death-hour. The day will come, when we too shall lie helplessly on our bed, and long for the assistance

which takes away the terror of the approaching judgment. And men will deal with us, as we have dealt with others in like need. *With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed.* (Ecclesiastic. i, 13.) Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Ephes VI, 10-17.
Gosp. Matt. XVIII, 23-35.

Subject.—*Debts.*

Text.—*Pay what thou owest.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The servant spoken of in the Gospel as owing ten thousand talents, was, we must suppose, a chief steward who had embezzeled the revenues of the king to the enormous amount in our money, of nearly twelve million dollars. It was a debt so great that he could hardly expect to pay it, yet the king pardoned him entirely, because of his repentance. On the other hand, the servant shows himself most exacting, in demanding the sums due to him from his poorer fellow-servants.

Transition.—We see here an example of a man who goes unreasonably into debt, and at the same time oppresses the poor by exacting debts, which under the circumstances they are unable to pay. The manifest lesson of the parable given in the Gospel is that it is sinful :

I. To incur unreasonable debts ;

II. To extort or impose debts, when charity and justice forbid it ;

III. Not to pay ones lawful debts ;

First Point.—To incur a debt, when we have no reasonable hope that we can ever pay it back, is the same as obtaining money under false pretence. It is a violation of the seventh commandment: *Thou shalt not steal.*

There are, however, various ways, besides borrowing money or goods, that a person may incur a legitimate but unreasonable debt. A laborer may neglect his work, and thus injure the interests of his master. A servant may habitually squander the goods of the house, and cause in time a considerable loss. A wife may be extravagant in dress and living, and compromise her husband by draining his income and credit. Again, our carelessness or malice may damage our neighbor's goods and belongings. A reckless tongue may deprive a business or tradesman of his legitimate income or profit. All these are means and ways in which we incur debts, which it is ordinarily out of our power to repay. For, the injury we do by neglect, or extravagance, or carelessness, and malicious words, can rarely be measured, and is ordinarily forgotten, until the voice of our Judge shall remind us of it on the last day.

Second Point.—If it is dangerous and sinful to incur thoughtless and unreasonable debts, which we can never have any hope of repaying, it is *doubly criminal to force others into our debts unlawfully*, or to extort payment, where justice and charity alike forbid it. This is done

a. By *cheating* in the transaction of business, through false weight or measure, through misrepresentation and false pretences, by which persons are unwittingly forced to pay more than the just price for the goods they receive.

b. By *intimidation*, *bribes*, *usury;* or by *oppression of the poor*, and withholding from laborers their wages under plea of defective work.

c. By giving false testimony which causes loss to others, by engaging in unjust lawsuits, by receiving stolen goods, by retaining things that we have found, without making any attempt to find the owner.

Third Point.—Finally, we are guilty of sin against the seventh commandment, if we fail to pay our just debts, or delay unreasonably and unnecessarily in doing so.

These things are often accounted of small weight among men who have no religion, yet God is just and forgets none of His laws or man's transgression. *He shall not judge according to the sight of the eyes*, says the prophet Isaias, (Is. XI, 3-5) *nor reprove according to the hearing of the ears; but He shall judge the poor with justice, and shall reprove with equity in favor of the meek of the earth: and He shall strike the earth—and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked: and justice shall be the girdle of His loins, and faith the girdle of His reins.*

He that is generous with ill-gotten goods, who bestows charities whilst he fails to pay his just debts, displeases God and scandalizes men, who see the deceit. *The offering of him that sacrifices a thing wrongfully gotten*, says Ecclesiasticus (xxxiv, 21, 23, 24), *is stained, and the mockeries of the unjust are not acceptable. The Most High approveth not the gifts of the wicked; neither has he respect to the oblations of the unjust, nor will he be pacified for sins by the multitude of their sacrifices. He that makes offering from the goods of the poor is like one who sacrifices the son in the presence of his father.*

Conclusion.—We have seen in how many ways a Christian may place himself in the position of a debtor, by imprudent and selfish action toward his fellow-man. It is wise to examine our consciences regarding our doings and words. *As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner.* (Luk. vi, 31.) There will surely come a day of careful scrutiny, when all things will be revealed before the full light of God's judgment seat, and in view of those to whom we owe full restitution of every farthing. Let us see to it, that then it may not be too late, and the *Lord being angry*, deliver us, like the hardened servant in the Gospel, *to the torturers, until* we have *paid all the endless debt* in the eternal flames of His just anger. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Phil. I, 6-11.
Gosp. Matt. XXII, 15-21.

Subject.—*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

Text.—*The Pharisees went and consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in His speech.*

Introduction.—The principal object which the Pharisees and Herodians had in view, in proposing to Jesus the question about paying tribute to Cæsar, was that they might take hold of Him in His words, and accuse him falsely. For in asking Him, *Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not?* they reasoned thus: Either He will say yes or no. If He says *yes*, we shall accuse Him to the Jewish people, who are oppressed by Cæsar and do not wish to pay tribute. If He says *no*, we can accuse Him to the emperor, because he stirs up the people to rebellion, by telling them not to pay the tax to Cæsar.

Their object was to calumniate Him one way or another, and by their false testimony to place Him in prison, or, as they eventually succeeded in doing, to have Him put to death.

Transition.—Last Sunday we dwelt on the violation of the seventh commandment by recklessly incurring debt, or by failing to pay it when it is just, all of which is a species of theft. To-day the Gospel gives us an opportunity of briefly explaining the eighth commandment, which forbids *false testimony*, *lying*, *calumny*, *detraction*, *backbiting*, *injurious words*, *rash judgments* and, in short, all words, written or spoken, which injure the character of our neighbor.

When the injury done by such words is grave, they are mortal sins. We may class such offenses generally under one or several of three heads:

I. Violation of truth,
II. Violation of reverence due to God,
III. Violation of justice and charity.

First Point.—Man naturally prefers that which is genuine and true to that which is false and spurious, in the objects which he possesses. True gold, a real gem, a genuine work of art—these are the things which all men value more than the imitations and counterfeits, although these serve us often as well. But in matters of the soul, only that serves which is true. Solomon accounted mercy and truth as the two greatest treasures of man. *Let not mercy and truth*, he says, *ever forsake thee*; *put them about thy neck and write them in the tablets of thy heart.* (Prov. iii, 3.)

Now we offend against truth by *lying*. A lie is to say what one knows or believes to be untrue, with the intention to deceive. *Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord*, says the Wise Man. (Prov. xii, 22.) And again we read: *A thief is better than a man that is always lying; but both shall inherit destruction.* (Ecclesiastic. xx, 27.)

We sometimes speak of *lies of excuse*, or what are called *white lies*, as if they were entirely harmless. This is not the case. They are at least venial sins, whenever they actually deceive or are intended to deceive a person; they are therefore to be avoided: *You shall not lie, neither shall any man deceive his neighbor.* (Lev. xix, 11.)

Second Point.—When a lie is told in a court of law, or under oath, it becomes a much more grievous sin. No matter how good our purpose may be, how much of temporal interest may be involved, even to human life itself—it can never be lawful to call God to witness in a falsehood. Now an oath means nothing less than invoking God to attest that we speak the truth.

Indeed it is wise to refrain from taking an oath even in matters of truth, unless it is absolutely necessary, and for the purpose of attesting a serious matter. A Catholic should not lightly take an oath upon the Bible, even in a court of justice, where we are obliged to give truthful testimony. It is the privilege of every American citizen to *affirm*, as the sect of Friends (Quakers) do, instead of taking the oath,—especially on a non-Catholic Bible,—whenever we have con-

scientious scruples of using the name of God in affairs of no great moment.

As to swearing lightly, through habit, it is likewise a sin against the reverence due to God, and often we add to this by the sin of scandal; for the lips of a Catholic, especially of one who has made his first holy Communion, and whose tongue has been touched by the sacred Body and Blood of our Lord, should never be defiled in this way. *Let not thy mouth be accustomed to swearing*, says Holy Writ, *for in it there are many falls. And let not the naming of God be usual in thy mouth, and meddle not with the names of Saints, for thou shalt not escape.* (Ecclesiastic. xxiii, 9.) *A man that sweareth much shall be filled with iniquity, and a scourge shall not depart from his house.* (Ibid.)

Third Point.—But we violate the law of both justice and charity, when we are guilty of slander or detraction; such as was the implied action and intention of the Pharisees toward our Lord when they sought to ensnare Him in words, that they might accuse Him.

Slander is to say or insinuate anything against our neighbor, which we know, or have reason to think, is false. *A deceitful witness that uttereth lies, the Lord detesteth.* (Prov. vi, 19.)

Perhaps we are tempted to soothe our consciences in the reflection that what we have said against our neighbor is true, yet even this is a grave sin. *Detraction* is making known without sufficient reason, the true but secret faults of our neighbor. *Refrain your tongue from detraction, for an obscure speech shall not go for naught.* (Wisd. i, 11.) *My son*, says Solomon, *fear the Lord and have nothing to do with detractors, for their destruction shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth the ruin of both.* (Prov. xxiv, 21.)

There are indeed circumstances and times which render it not only lawful but a duty to make known the faults of others. This is the case when

a. The spiritual good of a person requires that we should inform his superior of a fault, for the sake of having it corrected. But in these cases, we ought to be very

sure that such correction is needed, and that we ourselves are not seeing the mote in our brother's eye, forgetting the beam in our own.

b. When we or others are falsely suspected of a wrong, which we know to be due to a third party, who would allow the innocent to suffer the blame or penalty.

c. When a serious injury to the common good, spiritual or temporal, would be the result of our silence.

Conclusion.—Let us then be careful to avoid these various offenses against the eighth commandment. *He that deceiveth the just in a wicked way shall fall in his own destruction and the upright shall possess his goods,* says the Holy Ghost through the mouth of the prophet. (Prov. xxviii, 10.) *A lie is a foul blot in a man, and yet it will be continually in the mouth of men without discipline.* (Eccl. xx, 26.) And what you feel to be a wrong against your brother, do not encourage or countenance it in others. *Remove from thee a froward mouth and let detracting lips be far from thee.* (Prov. 4, 24.) But follow rather the counsel of the Prince of the Apostles, who would have us lay away *all malice and all detractions, as new born babes desire the rational milk,* (I Pet. ii, 1,) being just toward one another, and fostering peace and charity. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Phil. III, 17; IV, 3.
Gosp. Matt. IX, 18-26.

Subject.—*The Scorn of the World.*

Text.—*And they laughed Him to scorn.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—In the epistle of to-day, the Apostle calls attention to the contrast between the followers of Christ, who glory in the lowliness of the Cross, and those who are

enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly and whose glory is in their shame. Such were they who, when Christ came to raise to life the dead daughter of the ruler, laughed Him to scorn. They did not recognize the divine element under the humble appearance of the Master, who came in poverty and simplicity, to perform the great miracle of awakening the dead child to life.

Transition.—Just so it is with the sacred Spouse of Christ, our holy Church. She occupies herself with the poor and the humble. Men regard her as a subject of reproach, because her mission is continually among the despised of earth, the illiterate, the criminal, and what are called the outcast portion of society. Many fail to recognize her divine mission, because there is so little of that outward grandeur, which counts so much in the eyes of this world. Yet the observant and thoughtful man, the sincere searcher after truth, soon realizes the wonderful power of the Catholic Church, which silently infuses life into the decaying social body. We ask ourselves: Why is this so? Why is God and His Spouse, the Church, so wedded to what the world despises and scoffs at, a scandal to the Jews, a stumbling block to the Gentiles? The answer is:

I. Because lowly ways and humble means to accomplish great works, *bring out God's power the more.*

II. Because in humble ways, man *preserves better the virtues of dependence on God, patience and charity*, which are the groundwork of the Christian faith.

III. Because it is the lowly appearance of Christ in His Church, which is the real *test of sincerity in those who seek truth* and who are not actuated by the grandeur and attraction of that outward show, which draws to itself the worldly minded. Let us briefly develop these three points.

First Point—The most remarkable feature of Christ's teaching, illustrated by His own example, is its rejection of everything which the world counts great and desirable, such as preference of birth, wealth, magnificence of power,

pride of intellect and human wisdom, ease and comfort of life.

Witness the lowliness of our Lord's birth at Bethlehem, His habitual poverty, His apparent weakness when He flies from the persecution of King Herod, His eagerness to hide His divine attributes in the silent working of miracles, and His splendor in His transfiguration whereof He bids those who have seen it not to speak. He flies from the multitude when they wished to make Him king. He dies the most ignominious death of the cross. All this is in direct opposition to what the world would call a successful life. Yet it accomplished the great purpose of the divine Wisdom, as is shown by the wonderful results to which Christianity attained in later times, whilst all the great pagan governments, all the celebrated schools of irreligion and philosophy vanished before the light, which the humble missionaries of the Catholic Church brought in after days.

And what our Lord acted out in His own life, that He also taught His disciples and their successors to observe. The Church was to be as the grain of mustard, the smallest of all the seeds whence trees grow. That seed was to be crushed, and through mortification and struggle in the lowly darkness of earth, it was to work its way upward to the light. It was the cross, the symbol of shame and ignominy among the Romans, which was to be forever the sign and standard of the Christian faith.

Second Point.—That faith is indeed best preserved by the exercise of humility and those allied virtues. which constantly recall to our minds our utter incapacity to do aught of ourselves, and hence our absolute dependence on God.

One of the words of our Lord, which have come down to us through the ages, as the summary of Christian doctrine, is this one: *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.* (Matt. xi, 29.) And the Apostle of the Gentiles is emphatic in inculcating this particular characteristic of our Lord: *Let this mind be in you*, he writes to the Philippians, (ii, 5), *which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in*

the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but debased Himself, taking the form of a servant. And elsewhere he bids the Romans, who were in those days the peers of civilized nations and proud of their learned philosophers, not to mind high things, but to consent to the humble: *Be not wise in your own conceits* (Rom. xii, 16). *The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shall find grace before God; for great is the power of God alone, and He is honored by the humble.* (Ecclesiastic. iv, 20.) Thus faith is preserved by the virtue of humility which enters into the practical life of every true Christian.

As St. Paul says: *Thou standest by faith; be not high minded, but fear.* (Rom. xi, 20.)

Third Point.—But the characteristic lowliness of the Church is also a test of sincerity for those who seek the truth in her.

We all know what a change there is wrought in the public mind, when a man or woman celebrated and influential in any sphere of life, suddenly becomes a convert to the Catholic faith. Those who honored them before, begin to shun them and criticize their motives; often they have to sacrifice their dearest affections in life—domestic peace, position, and the means of barely earning a livelihood, and all this for no other reason than having followed the plain dictates of their conscience to embrace the faith of Christ in all its original purity.

In the same way we find religious men and women, who have devoted themselves to a life of voluntary poverty and the service of the poor, the sick and the orphans, the outcasts and lepers, ill-treated and reviled, expelled from their homes and native country. And yet the world, which ignores the silent work of the thousands of humble religious, who labor for Christ's sake from the first dawn of their happy youth through days and nights of sacrifices and broken health, that same world will make much renown for a man of the world, who builds for his town a memorial fountain, and for himself a monument from his easily acquired wealth.

Yet Christ told us that it would ever be so: *Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall lament and weep and the world shall rejoice.* And He makes it out as one of the sure evidences of the children of the Church being made heirs to the kingdom of heaven, that men would persecute and revile them: *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you.* (Matt. v, 10–12.)

And so it has ever been in the Catholic Church. The periods of her persecutions have been the times of her glory, in the gain of martyrs and saints. The poor in spirit, the foolish of this world, the little ones of whom men hardly take any account—these are the predestined of God, the heroes of the Catholic Church. *Blessed are the poor*, says our Lord, and again: *Amen, I say unto you, that unless you be converted and become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.* (Matt. xviii, 3.) He rejoices that it is so ordained by the Eternal Father: *I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it has seemed good in Thy sight.* (Luke x, 21.)

Conclusion.—Should we then not rather glory in the fact that Catholics, as such, are made a target of reproach, by those who do not wish to see the truth of our holy faith, because they are full of their own conceit, or because they love that which the Christian is taught to despise. But let us likewise learn to practice the lesson of humility, by patient forbearance and constant charity, toward those who may take offense in us, as the Jews took offense in our divine Lord; and let us demonstrate by our conduct, by fidelity to the sublime precepts of our holy Church, that God's spirit dwells in us, so that those who are perhaps groping for the light of truth may recognize God's ways, and find in the Catholic Church light and peace of heart. Amen.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Taken from the Third Sunday after Epiphany.)

Epist. Rom. XII, 16-21.
Gosp. Matt. VIII, 1-13.

Subject.—*Superiors and their Subjects.*

Text.—*For I also am a man subject to authority.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The Centurion spoken of in the Gospel was a Roman officer in the army of Herod Antipas, and understood the value of authority and discipline, as a means of preserving order in every rightly organized body. He recognized our Lord as the chief of a Spiritual Kingdom, in which there were subjects ready to execute His orders, and in appealing to His authority the centurion drew from our Saviour a beautiful tribute to his faith: *Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel.*

Transition.—The authority of Christ, exercised by Him in His own person while He dwelt in His humanity upon earth, was after His Ascension committed to St. Peter and the Apostles, and extended with the gradual growth of His Church upon earth, so as to form, in time, a perfectly organized hierarchy, governing the different portions of Christ's flock in regular and graded order, as Pope, Bishops and Priests.

Side by side, and in harmony with this spiritual rule, goes that of the temporal order, in each of which superiors and subjects have their several obligations, which may be classed under three heads.

I. Duties of superiors and of subjects in the *spiritual order;*

II. Duties of superiors and of subjects in the *civil order;*

III. Duties of superiors and of subjects in the *social and domestic order*, apart from those of parents and children, on which we shall dwell separately at another time.

First Point.—The obligations of ecclesiastical superiors to teach truth, to exhort to virtue, to administer the sacraments, to denounce scandals, to visit the sick and to help the dying

even at the risk of their lives, naturally presuppose certain correlative duties on our part. We are therefore bound to obey them in spiritual matters, to give them the honor which is due to their sacred persons, and to contribute to their support. The high character of their calling demands from us respect without dissimulation, and obedience in all things, which they bid us according to the divine law. Our Lord admonishes the Jews to obey the Pharisees and Scribes, although he does not approve of their conduct: *All things therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do.* (Matt. xxiii, 2.)

There is a special malice of a sacrilegious character in calumnies, detractions, public ridicule and the like, when these are directed against persons consecrated to the altar.

Second Point.—The civil ruler is bound, according to the extent of his office and power, to devote himself honestly to the promotion of the public good, to administer justice with impartiality, and to enforce order and liberty of conscience, by every legitimate means at his command. To make, or give one's consent to the making of unjust laws, to bribe and extort money for the promotion of selfish interests, are grievous sins against the subjects of a civil community.

On the other hand, we as citizens are bound to be subject, as St. Paul says, *to princes and powers, to obey at a word, to be ready to every good work* (Tit. iii, 1); that is to say, to all legitimate civil authority. We are to show respect not only to them personally, but to their ordinances and just laws, thus giving expression to our reverence by the loyalty of our conduct and speech.

Third Point.—In the social and domestic life, there arise the duties of employers and employed, of master and servant.

A master is not fulfilling his whole duty toward the help which he employs, when he pays them their just wages. He owes something to the souls of his dependents, as well as to their bodies. Hence it is not only kind but obligatory, to direct them, so far as his influence reaches, to the observance

of the divine law, and the exercise of their religious duties. He should advise them and influence them, both by kindness and good example, to attend to the one thing necessary, their eternal salvation. Mistresses can do much for their servants by giving them good books, or periodicals like the *Ave Maria*, the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, and similar pure literature to read. This applies, to some extent, even to servants who are not Catholics, but otherwise well disposed to embrace the truth.

Servants have for the guidance of their conduct this precept of the Apostle St. Peter: *Servants be subject to your masters, with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.* (I Pet. ii, 18.) And St. Paul speaks in the same strain: *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh—in the simplicity of your hearts, as to Christ. Not as serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.—Knowing that whatsoever good thing a man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.* (Ephes. vi, 5–8.)

To neglect your work, to waste the property of your employers, to backbite or calumniate them, or to reveal their family secrets—these are very grievous sins into which servants easily fall.

But if we owe reverence and obedience to our temporal superiors, in all things which concern our service, we are bound to respect the law of God, above all things, and even at the risk of displeasing our employers. The duties of our holy religion are of first importance. If therefore occasions present themselves when the domestic or social duties conflict with our obligation as Catholics, we are bound to give the preference to the latter. If we are prevented from attending Mass on Sundays and holy-days, unless it be in the case of sickness, or the like necessity; or if our employer makes it difficult, or impossible, to keep the laws of abstinence and fast; or where we are in serious danger of committing sin, our plain duty is to leave a service which is incompatible with fidelity to the law of God, which we are in conscience bound to observe.

Conclusion.—Let then, as the Apostle says: *Every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God.—Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation.—Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same. Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.* (Rom. xiii, 1-5.) Amen.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Taken from the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.)

Epist. Rom. XIII, 8-18.
Gosp. Matt. VIII, 23-27.

Subject.—*Faith.*

Text.—*O ye of little faith.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—In the Catacombs of Rome, there is to be found a very ancient picture, representing the Catholic Church in the form of a boat sailing, under the impulse of divine grace, toward theharbor of eternity. Christ Himself sits at the rudder, holding a book; in front stands a man looking toward the port, to whom our Lord addresses Himself, as if to instruct him concerning the law of faith to be found in the bark of St. Peter, the Catholic Church.

Transition.—In a similar manner, our holy Church is represented by the storm-tossed vessel on the Galilean sea, that evening when our Lord seemed to be forgetful of His disciples, although He was in truth only testing their faith. He had preached to the multitude all that day. He had performed miracles in their sight; yet when the hour of trouble came, and the Lord seemed to sleep, they became

distrustful. "O ye of little faith!" To how many nominal Christians does this reproach of our Lord apply. They seem to be true to their divine Master whilst all goes well, yet in temptation, or affliction, they act and speak as though their faith were dead. Let us briefly examine this precious boon of our salvation, and recall to mind—

I. What is faith;
II. How necessary it is to each of us;
III. Where alone it is to be found.

First Point.—Faith means belief in something which we are told on good authority and know to be true, although we cannot see or prove it ourselves. Thus we believe that there are cities and towns much like our own, in Australia, or China, or Africa; for, although we have never seen them, we are told so on good and sufficient authority. (Other examples.)

Divine faith means belief in truths which we cannot see or understand, but which God has revealed. The perfection of divine faith is to believe, without doubting, whatever the Catholic Church teaches; for that Church is commissioned to teach what God has revealed.

Now what God has revealed is *infallibly true;* for God is Truth. Our reason, therefore, for believing what the Catholic Church teaches, is the infallible truthfulness of Almighty God, who speaks to us through His Church.

Second Point.—To believe in revealed truth is a condition of salvation. God has, as it were, called together His children, and told them where they might find complete happiness. He points out to them the way, which is in many places rough and narrow, but which leads infallibly to the beautiful region of eternal peace and joy. He wishes them to go that way, and He tells them that, if they wilfully take another, they shall go astray, and that if they do not believe His words, they will surely come to grief.

Hence we read of our Lord (who had come on earth to show us this road to eternal salvation, being Himself, the

Truth, the Way, the Life) that He said: *He that believeth not shall be condemned.* (Mark xvi, 16.) And if there were any doubt as to the real meaning of these words, we have the assurance of the Apostles, especially St. Paul, to the same effect: *Without faith*, he writes to the Hebrews (xi, 6,) *it is impossible to please God.* And he reminds the Ephesians (ii, 8) that *by grace* they are saved, *through faith.*

Third Point.—But does God show this way to eternal salvation to every man, in order to enable him to be saved by the true faith?

Yes, for, although God gives more light to some than to others, just as He creates some flowers more beautiful to our sight than others, yet, as St. John says in his Gospel, we have a Father in heaven *who enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.* (John i, 9.) Every human being may know by a natural gift added to his intelligence, that there is a God and that He is the rewarder of good and evil. The child, before it is taught his catechism, blushes when it lies or steals, because the fundamental commandments of God are written in its heart.

Those who live within reach of the Christian revelation are bound to use their reason to inquire into the law of God; and if they do so, faithfully observing the light of natural reason, they must of necessity arrive at the Catholic Church, which is like a city placed on the mountain top, visible everywhere, and at all times.

Her institution and doctrine go back to the days of Christ, and as Christ is preached everywhere, even in the remotest lands by Catholic missionaries, the laws and teaching of the Church can be examined by most men. For those who are incapable of doing this, God provides in His infinite mercy, as He provided in the old law for virtuous and rightminded pagans, who knew not the law of Moses.

The Catholic religion is founded on definite truths, which are summed up in the Apostle's Creed. All her laws are directed toward reforming man and leading him in the way of knowing, loving and serving God aright.

Conclusion.—How grateful we should be, that God has pointed out to us this faith, without any effort on our part. If we are but true to its precepts, having confidence in the Lord who guides our vessel, although He seems at times to abandon us to the tossing of the storm, we shall not only arrive with Christ in the harbor of salvation, but shall bring others to join us in the happy triumph of the Catholic Church, the reign of Christ on earth as in heaven. Cease not, *giving thanks*, with the Apostle of the Gentiles, *to God the Father, who has made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the Saints in light—who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of his love,—in whom we have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins.* (Coloss. i, 12.) Amen.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Taken from the Fifth after Epiphany.)

Epist. Col. III, 12-17.
Gosp. Matt. XIII, 24-39.

Subject.—*Idleness.*

Text.—*But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way.* (Gosp.)

Introduction.—The parable of the cockle sown among the growing wheat teaches us the necessity of watchfulness in the great work of our salvation. It is indeed the portion reserved to Himself by our divine Master, to separate, at the general harvest on the last day, the good from the bad, and to cast the latter into the flames. Nevertheless, it behooves us as watchful servants, to prevent the enemy from sowing his poisonous seed in the field of Christ.

Transition.—The neglect to do so, through idleness, injures the healthy growth of the good, inasmuch as it takes valuable moisture and nutrition from the soil; and much of

the wheat is thus dwarfed and dies, beside the quick growth of useless or noxious tares. Let us briefly consider the vice of idleness.

I. As a dishonor to man's high calling.
II. As a source of
a. discontent,
b. poverty,
c. sin, and
d. loss of freedom.

First Point.—The right use of his gifts and talents was, from the beginning, the condition of man's happiness on earth. Before sin came into the world, God had placed man in a Paradise of pleasure, *to dress it and to keep it.* (Gen. ii, 15.)

After the fall of our first parents, sorrow and pain were added to this condition. The Lord God sent him out of the Paradise of pleasure *to till the earth from which he was taken.* (Gen. iii, 23.) But although labor in the sweat of the brow was a punishment for transgression, God still wished labor to remain the inseparable accompaniment of human dignity. *Arise, then, and be doing and the Lord will be with thee.* (I Paral. xxii, 16.) *If thou be diligent,* says Solomon, *thy harvest shall come as a fountain, and want shall be far from thee.* (Prov. vi, 11.) Nor is labor devoid of its benefits for the soul, since the same Wise Man tells us, that *the soul of them that work shall be made fat,* (Prov. xiii, 4), that is to say, joy and wisdom and prudence shall not be wanting to them that are industrious, for *the thoughts of the industrious always bring forth abundance.* (Prov. xxi, 5.)

The labor of him who diligently attends to the blessing of God, and who does not merely follow a morbid desire to amass wealth, dignifies the position of man. We all admire and honor those who are known to be faithful in the performance of their duties, and we have an inward respect for the honest laborer in any sphere of life; which exceeds the esteem paid to worldly greatness or wealth and power. *We beseech*

you, brethren, writes St. Paul (I Tim. v, 12), *to know them that labor among you; and to admonish you that you esteem them more abundantly in charity for their work's sake.*

In the same proportion as we respect the faithful workman do we despise the idle and slothful, for *man is born to labor*, says Job (v, 7), as the bird to fly. No one is exempted from this duty of a constant occupation, *from him that sitteth on a glorious throne unto him that is humbled in earth and ashes*, (Ecclesiastic. xl, 3), although the kinds of labor enjoined upon man differ much in their character, one laboring with his mind and heart, the other toiling with his hands; one through a sense of duty, the other from necessity to earn his daily bread.

Second Point.—But let him who is not moved by a sense of his inborn dignity to employ his faculties and time as God has ordained for every man, consider the sad consequences of idleness and sloth.

a. The human mind is naturally restless, and it draws the body with it. Unless we occupy both, with some labor which is useful and conducive to good order, they will turn their energies in the direction of disorder, and meddle with things out of their rightful domain. This breeds contention and dissatisfaction. Such are they of whom St. Paul speaks: *We have heard*, he says, *there are some among you who walk disorderly, working not at all, but curiously meddling.* (II Tim. iii, 11.)

b. With discontent are allied many other evils in the slothful. As a rule, poverty follows in the wake of them that labor not. *Love not sleep lest poverty oppress thee.* (Prov. xx, 13.) *He that followeth idleness shall be filled with poverty.* (Ib. xxviii, 19.) *The slothful hand hath wrought poverty, but the hand of the industrious getteth riches.* (Ib. x, 4.) *Thou wilt sleep a little, thou wilt slumber a little, thou wilt fold thy hands a little to rest. And poverty shall*

come to thee as a runner and begging as an armed man. (Ib. xxiv, 33.) *Because of the cold the sluggard would not plough: he shall beg therefore in the summer, and it shall not be given him.* (Ib. xx, 4.) Thus speaks Solomon, the wisest of men.

c. Is it necessary, my brethren, to prove to you that idleness is the source of manifold sin? It has become a proverb among all nations, that sloth leads to the invention of mischief. *Idleness*, says Ecclesiasticus, *has taught much evil.* (xxxiii, 29.) The Apostle of the Gentiles reproaches some of the members in the flock of St. Timothy, because *being idle, they learn to go about from house to house*; *and are not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* (I Tim. v, 13.) (The vice of drink, gambling, etc., results of idleness.)

d. Lastly, idleness weakens a man's intelligence and will, until he becomes a slave to his own perverse habits, and finds himself almost incapable of returning to an honorable pursuit. *He that pursueth idleness is very foolish.* (Prov. xii, 11.) *The hand of the valiant shall bear rule: but that which is slothful shall be under tribute.* (Ib. xii, 24.) Even the man of wealth is subject to this law, although he may appear to have abundance of store whence to foster an idle life. Riches easily become a source of corruption, and there is a retribution which humbles the pride of wealth, even in this life. Hence St. James could rightfully say: *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire.* (James v, 1-3.)

Conclusion.—Watch, then, even those whom the Lord has blessed with temporal goods, lest the evening come

whilst you sleep, and deprive you of the fruits of that which honest industry preserves for the good and useful purposes of life. Follow the dictate of the Apostle who says: *We entreat you that you do your own business and work with your own hands, that you walk honestly toward them that are without.* (I Tim. iv, 11.) Amen.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

(Taken from the Sixth after Epiphany.)

Epist. I Thess. I, 2-10.
Gosp. Matt. XIII, 31-35.

Subject.—*The Communion of Saints.*

Text.—*The birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Both the parable of the mustard seed and that of the leaven may be taken to symbolize the inward strength of the Catholic Church, which draws unto herself, and incorporates in her living organism, all the various elements of human society.

Transition.—In this human society are included all her children, living and dead; for the Church on earth has its termination and purpose in heaven, just as her divine Spouse, though He dwelt on earth in the form of a man, had His home at the right hand of the Eternal Father.

I wish therefore to hold your attention for a brief reflection on the meaning and blessings for us of the Communion of Saints, which doctrine is an article of our Catholic faith. We shall inquire:

I. Wherein this Communion consists;

II. What are its advantages for us who represent the Church militant.

First Point.—By the Communion of Saints we understand the spiritual union of all Catholic Christians on earth with

each other, and also with the souls of the departed in Purgatory and in Heaven. For of the children of God there are three classes—the pilgrim seeking to attain his end, on the journey to heaven ; the footsore traveller who, having reached the end of the road, awaits the dressing of his wounds by the passing Samaritan, in order that he may well and joyfully enter the abode of that third class, who have happily attained the sweet rest of Paradise.

This union rests upon the common Fatherhood of God, and on the fact that Christ, His Son, redeemed all men. God is the head of the Church ; but as He wished the Church to be a visible organization, so He placed over it a visible head, chosen in the first instance by Christ our Lord, who founded the visible Church, and after Him, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, by men appointed for the purpose.

Hence the bond of union, the connecting link between the Church militant on earth, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant, is the Sovereign Pontiff, the vicegerent on earth of Christ, as head of the Communion of Saints.

Through him, as through a living channel, the faithful communicate with one another, with the souls of the departed in Purgatory, and with the saints of heaven.

Second Point.—And what advantage does this triple union bring to the children of the Church triumphant, suffering, and militant?

a. It increases the joys of the saints :

1. by the confidence we show them ;
2. by the honor and devotion we pay them ;
3. by thus proclaiming the glory of God on earth.

b. It relieves the souls of our suffering brethren : by the prayers and good works we offer in their behalf. (II Machab. xii, 46.)

c. It gains for us :

1. The love of the Blessed in heaven ;

2. The gratitude of the souls in Purgatory;

3. The wondrous graces, spiritual and temporal, which flow from union in prayer with our brethren on earth, in every land, of every race, night and day.

The Catholic is at home wherever he finds a chapel containing the Blessed Sacrament, or a priest, or a fellow Catholic in humble station or high. (Dwell on this fellowship which inspires confidence and courage in arduous undertakings, etc.)

Conclusion.—Is not this a most beautiful and consoling doctrine, my brethren, of which we should constantly avail ourselves, not only in our own trials but for the relief of others, *praying always*, as the Apostle writes to the Ephesians, *with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit—for all—and for me.* (Eph. vi, 18,19.) And behold God will send His Angels and Saints before thee, and keep thee in thy journey, and bring thee into the place that He has prepared for thee. Love one another; bear ye one another's burden. Pray for each other, and for those who have departed this life and can no longer merit of their own will, yet may be relieved by our intercession. This done enter the kingdom of heaven, there to remember our fellowship in the Communion of Saints. Amen.

LAST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Epist. Col. I, 9-14.
Gosp. Matt. XXIV, 15-35.

Subject.—*The Particular Judgment after Death.*

Text.—*When you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The ecclesiastical year ends on this Sunday with a consideration of the Last Judgment, which our Lord vividly pictures to His disciples. Next Sunday the

Church begins her new year with the same theme for the meditation of the Christian, because in the reflection on our future judgment, we find the highest motive for refraining from sin, and thus secure our eternal salvation.

Transition.—It has been the constant teaching of the Church, resting upon the words of Sacred Scripture, that every man is judged immediately after his death, which judgment precedes the general judgment on the last day, when the justice of God shall be made manifest before all mankind. St. Paul closely connects the idea of death and judgment when he says that, "It is ordained unto men once to die, and after that the judgment." (Hebr. ix, 27.) And the words of our divine Lord to the penitent thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," lead us to infer that the sentence will be pronounced immediately, without awaiting the vindication of the final day. (St. Luke xxiii, 43. See also xvi, 22, where Dives is said to be buried in hell.)

Let us briefly examine the motives which should cause us to dread this awful day, when we shall have to appear before the divine tribunal.

I. Who is our Judge?
II. In what shall we have to answer Him?
III. What is the result of His judgment?

First Point.—Our Judge is God.

a. Almighty. *O Adonai* (Lord), cries out Judith, *great art Thou and glorious in Thy Power, and no one can overcome Thee. Let all Thy creatures serve Thee.* (Jud. xvi, 16.) And Job, who had felt the mighty hand of his Maker, calls out: *God whose wrath no man can resist, and under whom they stoop that bear up the world* (Job ix, 13). *Who shall withstand Thy judgment? or who shall come before Thee to be a revenger of wicked men? or who shall accuse Thee, if the nations perish which Thou hast made?* (Wisd. xii, 12)—*Lift up your eyes*, says the prophet Isaias, *and see who*

has created these things, who bringeth out their host by number, and calleth them all by their names: by the greatness of His might, and strength, and power. (Is. xl, 26.)

b. And this Judge *knoweth all things.* It is related of King Boleslaus IV., of Poland, that he wore habitually about his neck an image of his father, encased in a precious medallion, and as often as he was obliged to pronounce an important decision, or undertake a serious action, he would look upon this portrait, kiss it and say: "My dear father, I will say and do nothing unworthy of thy royal name." (Lohner Bibl. i, 566.) The realization that God knows all things, and sees us continually, should exert a like influence upon us; for, as Ecclesiasticus says: *The works of all flesh are before Him, and there is nothing hid from His eyes. He seeth from eternity to eternity* (xxxix, 24), or in the words of Job: *His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He considereth all their steps. There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they may be hid who work iniquity.* (Job xxxiv, 21.)

c. This good Judge, almighty and knowing all things, will judge with the most scrupulous *impartiality* every man that comes before Him. *I am the Lord,* He says, *who search the heart, and prove the reins; who give to every one according to his way and according to the fruit of his devices.* (Jer. xvii, 10.)

I have seen those, says Job, *who work iniquity and sow sorrows and reap them, perishing by the blast of God and consumed by the spirit of His wrath.* (Job iv, 8.)

He will render to every man according to his works: to them indeed who, according to patience in good work seek glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life;—but to them that are contentious and who obey not the truth, but give credit to iniquity, wrath and indignation. (Rom. ii, 6–8.)

Second Point.—There are men, my brethren, who deem that their works can be hidden and explained away or forgotten, and that the mercy of God is like to the superficial and weak charity of the world. They say in the words of Holy Writ: *In such a multitude I shall not be known, for what is my soul in such an immense creation?* (Ecclesiastic. xvi, 17.) Yet *when God shall look at them, they shall be shaken with trembling.* (Ib. 19.) For in that awful solitude of the private judgment after death, the eternal Judge will ask us

a. Concerning the use of the *talents* and special *graces* He has given us, and of which in our lifetime we often boast as if they made us superior to others;

b. Concerning the *duties of our station in life*, as Christians, as heads or members of the family, as men of responsible positions, as subjects, etc.

Third Point.—Scrutinize thy heart, my brother, and do all in thy power to make this judgment in thy favor, for

a. It determines *the whole of man's existence* hereafter. In the misfortunes of earth there is some relief. Not all our course is misery. If many things go wrong there are some which turn to rights. Our tears are tempered by compassion and by smiles.

But in the judgment after death there is no alternative. It is either salvation, to end in the perfect joys of heaven; or it is loss of our souls, which means the corruption of our whole being, misery that covers every part of our human nature, leaving no enjoyment, no hope, no relief. *The sentence seals our future one way or other.* (St. Matt. xxv, 34–41.)

b. Not only is this judgment all embracing, it is also final and *forever.* Whatever men may say or invent about the pains of hell, to sooth themselves with false hopes amid their course of sin, the words of our Lord, infallibly true, are only too plain: *Depart from me into everlasting fire.* There is no end to that

which in the mouth of the Eternal God is *everlasting. They who obey not the Gospel shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His power*, says St. Paul. (II Tim. i, 9.)

Conclusion.—Who of us can dare the Lord, for *He is just and hath loved justice*, His countenance has *beheld righteousness.* (Ps. x, 8.) Think of it well, my brethren, that when the last day shall arrive for each of us, we may be able to say with the Apostle: *I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day; and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming.* (II Tim. iv, 8.) Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Epist. Rom. XIII, 11-14.
Gosp. Luke, XXI, 25-33.

Subject.—*The Expectation of the Redeemer.*

Text.—*Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* (Epistle.)

Introduction.—The season of Advent, which begins to-day, is to prepare us for the right celebration of Christmas, that beautiful feast by which the Church recalls to our minds the debt of gratitude which we owe God for the inestimable grace of our redemption.

Transition.—It is well then that we should turn our thoughts to this subject, so that the reflection may act upon our hearts, and dispose us, in a practical way, for the right appreciation of that holy mystery, which brought to us the first ray of light since Adam's fall, and on which we found the hopes of our eternal salvation. We shall therefore briefly dwell upon

I. The necessity of a redemption for us, who without it would have remained

a. debtors to the divine justice;

b. slaves to our own passions.

II. The actual promise of a Redeemer, which is vouched for

a. By the Word of God in Scripture, and in the living voice of the Holy Ghost, in the Church.

b. By the nature of God, who is not only just but merciful, and who wills not the destruction of His erring children.

III. The history of the world before the advent of our Redeemer, which gives plain evidence that God was preparing the world for such an event. The proofs of this fact are

a. The choice of the Hebrew people as the elect flock of God, from whose midst was to come the Redeemer; and

b. The ceremonial and prophetic figures of the Old Law.

First Point—(*a*) Through the rebellion of our first parents against God, we became bondsmen and slaves to the divine justice. Like Esau, they freely and contrary to the divine warning, gave up the innocent joys of Paradise and the treasure which would have rendered them and all their children forever happy.

We are sometimes tempted to think it an injustice, that we should have to suffer the consequences of the first fall; and yet every man and woman who commits a mortal sin, repeats the transgression of Adam and Eve. The vices and extravagances of parents are not the fault of their children, yet the children mostly inherit the evil tendences of their fathers or mothers, and are often made poor and miserable, through the sin and improvidence of those who should guard them. When to the disgrace which a child inherits from an evil father or mother, it adds its own sins, the debt grows until it exceeds all possibility of payment, since God's infinite majesty is offended, and no temporary satisfaction, which a creature can offer, could make proper redress.

Thus all men stand from their birth, and by their own per-

sonal transgressions, debtors to God; *for all have sinned*, as the Apostle says, *and do need the glory of God.* (Rom. iv, 23.) It required a Being, human at once and yet endowed with infinite merit, to wipe out the debt.

b. Moreover, when we give over the treasure of our innocence by deliberate sin, we place ourselves in the power of Satan. We read much in the Sacred Scriptures, and history, of people possessed by a demon. And we may even have seen great criminals who make upon us the impression that they were ruled by a devil, especially when the hour of death comes upon them in the midst of their career of sin. Just so in various degrees, the demon obtains control of every sinful heart, and nothing but a divine power can free such souls from the grasp of the infernal dragon.

If man was to be saved therefore, it could only be by the intervention of God.

This He has done, through His infinite mercy, by sending a Redeemer, Jesus Christ, His own divine Son. *He is the propitiation for our sins*, as St. John says, *and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.* (I John, ii, 2.) *He has graced us in His beloved Son. In whom we have redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which has superabounded in us.* (Eph. i, 7.)

Second Point.—The fact of man's redemption through Christ is the cardinal point of our religion, of our faith and hope. Christ came as the Redeemer; yet there were men who knew Him not, who would not receive Him. So in our own days many deny Him, although the evidence of history and the wondrous growth of the Catholic Church as His work, constantly bear witness to Him.

Yet there were also others who recognized Him as the Messias. Our Lord, when He came into the world, laid no claim to earthly greatness to announce His mission; still devout and thoughtful men everywhere knew that the time of a Redeemer was at hand. (Simeon, Anna, etc.)

How did they know this?

a. By the prophecies of the Old Law. God had from the

beginning announced His loving design of sending a Redeemer to save mankind from the misfortune, which the fall of our first parents had brought upon all posterity.

It was of the Redeemer to come at the end of ages that God spoke those consoling words to Abraham: *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* (Gen. xxii, 18), and again in the blessing of Jacob to Juda: *The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations.* (Gen. xlix, 10.) Of Him David prophesied in many places. Isaias testifies that *a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Immanuel*, which is to say "God with us." (Is. vii, 14.) And so all through the sacred Volume the promise is repeated, until every devout Hebrew made it the burden of his daily prayer, that he might be a witness to the coming of the Messiah.

b. *When the fulness of time was come*, St. Paul testifies that *God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law* (Gal. iv, 4), for so it was meet and fitting that the justice of Jehova should be tempered by His mercy. *It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, who had brought many children into glory to perfect the author of their salvation.* (Heb. ii, 10.) Thus God *commandeth His charity toward us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us.* (Rom. v, 8.)

Third Point.—

a. But if there were no explicit prophecy, if man had never learned to exalt God's mercy above all His other works, yet the entire history of the past would bear witness to the fact that the Father of mankind had laid some great design for the salvation of His children. The four thousand years before the coming of the Redeemer are but as a preparation and consis-

tent introduction to some great act, such as we witness in the divine Incarnation.

b. God sets apart a people, who are to foster this hope of redemption and to purify themselves by a gradual process of sanctification, as worthy progenitors of Him who was to be born of woman. This is the meaning of all the ceremonies and sacrifices offered up in propitiation and for a clean holocaust. Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, each are tried, and the reward of their fidelity is in every case a special grace given to their offspring, until the line of holy men from David, who weeps day and night, over his offence, ends in the spotless birth of a child, who is to unite in herself the miracle of immaculate virginity with the motherhood of the Christ.

Conclusion.—What the Fathers in the Old Testament longed for in burning words of prayer, that, my brethren, has found its accomplishment in the days of their children. Happy we, who are partakers of the grace of Redemption, and who can avail ourselves of its manifold fruits. To us apply the words which St. John spoke to the first Christians: *We saw His glory, as it were of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth.* (St. John i, 14.) Let us testify our appreciation of this great privilege by entering into the spirit of this holy season of Advent—(Exhortation to attend the Advent devotions, Mass, to prepare for the worthy reception of the sacraments, etc.) Amen.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Epist. Rom. XV, 4-13.
Gosp. Matt. XI, 2-10.

Subject.—*The Divinity of Christ.*

Text.—*Art Thou He that art to come or do we look for another?* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—On last Sunday we considered the subject of our Redemption as a divine promise of which the

history of the past as well as the Sacred Text of the Old Testament bore witness. And we saw how the designs of divine Providence were leading the Jewish race up to the accomplishment of this promise in the birth of the Messiah, who was true God and true man.

Transition.—At all times there have been men who have denied or questioned this fact of Christ's coming. Even good but superficial minds are sometimes found who will set aside all responsibility and sense of religious observance by throwing doubt upon a fact which does not impress them as true, simply because they have never earnestly examined the question for the sake of obtaining light. Like the disciples of St. John, they doubt whilst the evidence of the Christ is before them. As we are preparing for Christmas, it will be a fit theme, and in a manner a continuation of last Sunday's subject, to examine briefly the reasons why we as Catholics firmly believe in the divinity of Christ. Our arguments are drawn from two sources:

I. The Sacred Scriptures, in which we have, apart from the prophecies of the Old Testament
- *a.* The declaration of God the Father;
- *b.* The express declaration of our Lord Himself;
- *c.* The evidence of His works;
- *d.* The testimony of the Apostles.

II. The constant teaching of the Church as expressed in
- *a.* The writings of the Christian Fathers;
- *b.* The decrees of Councils;
- *c.* The living testimony of martyrs, confessors, virgins and holy persons, who were evidently approved by God.

First Point.—Let me say, before using any testimony of Sacred Scripture to prove the true divinity of Christ, that no man of honest purpose and sufficient knowledge of actual history has ever doubted that there existed 1860 years ago a wonderful man by the name of Christ. All historians, not only Christians, but Jews and Pagans agree to this fact, of which indeed there are numerous evidences in the monu-

ments of early Christians times and most of all in the book which we call the Bible, and which is the best preserved and one of the oldest history books in actual existence.

There was then such a man as He whom we honor as our Lord and Saviour. He was born under the reign of Augustus, and He died by a Roman decree condemning Him to the death of the Cross, through the jealousy of the Jewish High Priests, under the governorship of Pontius Pilate. So much is history.

But was this man, whom the Jewish people honored sometimes as a prophet, sometimes as a king, and sometimes as a divine being—was He the truly Eternal God descended from heaven?

a. Yes, my brethren, there can be no doubt of it. The fact was foretold with unmistakable clearness by Isaias: *Behold your God will bring the revenge of recompense; God Himself will come and will save you* (xxxv, 4) in the form of a child that is to bear the rule of the universe upon His shoulders and Whose *name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace,* (Ib. ix, 6, 7,). It was accomplished, and announced first by the voice of the Angel Gabriel to the lowly Virgin of Nazareth: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* (St. Luke i, 35.) Thirty years later the Eternal Father attested from the high heavens by His solemn voice at the Baptism and at the Transfiguration. *This is My beloved Son.* (St. Matt. iii, 17, and xvii, 5.)

b. But what does the Saviour whom all Judea and Galilee and the strangers from Samaria, and from the confines of Tyre and Sidon recognized as a wonderful prophet —what does He say of Himself? He, the humblest and lowliest, He who cared nothing for the praises and honors of men, and who fled when they wished to make Him king, because He went about everywhere doing good and bidding the people whom He had

healed not to speak of His miracles—He gives testimony of Himself, because He could not lie, and tells His disciples plainly that He is the only begotten Son of God. *The Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things which He Himself doth—wonder not at this for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God.* (St. John v, 20–28.) *He who honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father* (Ibid. 23.) *I and the Father are one.* He praises Simon Peter becauses he confesses His divinity. (St. Matt. xvi, 17.) He answers the High Priest, conjuring Him to say whether He is the Son of God, that He is so verily. (St. Matt. xxvi, 63.)

c. And if there could be any doubt about the meaning of these words, they are removed when we examine the wonderful works of Christ. It is needless to remind you of the events He foretold, the miracles He wrought, so that the Jews confessed that no man ever did or could do these things. (Prophecies of the betrayal of Judas—St. Matt. xxvi, 23; the denial of St. Peter—St. Mark xiv, 27; the destruction of Jerusalem—St. Luke, xix, 43; His own death and glorious resurrection, etc.—Works innumerable miracles, at Cana—St. John ii, 9; multiplication of bread—St. Matt. xiv, 20, and xv, 37; cures diseases—St. Matt. xv, 30; raises the dead to life—St. Luke, viii, 14, St. Matt. ix, 25, St. John, xi, 43.)

d. The men who lived with our divine Lord and who witnessed all these things have written them down for those who would follow them. No one can question the honesty of those simple fishermen and companions of Christ. It has been said that their enthusiasm made them exaggerate the works of their beloved Master, because they saw His holiness and made a God of the man from whose power they hoped to gain legitimate honor. But, my brethren, when our Lord had died the ignominious death of the Cross, when years of weary persecution had worn out the human

hopes and human endurance, would these men continue to live in poverty and abjection, and face a martyr's death for a vain expectation, unless they were convinced that the divinity of Christ which they preached in every land, under a thousand difficulties, and for which they died the most excruciating death, was a reality? A human enthusiasm dies out in time, but this enthusiasm for the truth of the divinity of Christ has outlasted every other doctrine and institution in the world, for:

Second Point.—

a. The Catholic Church has borne witness to it all these centuries. St. Ignatius the martyr, who knew our Lord as a child, for tradition has it that he was the infant whom the Saviour held upon His knees when He bade the disciples learn from little children how to enter the kingdom of heaven, writes to the Ephesians upon the divinity of Christ. The same testimony is given by others of that early age, such as St. Clement of Rome, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, and all the long line of Christian writers up to our own day.

b. From time to time, indeed, it happened that men arose who denied this truth in the face of Christian tradition. And the Church found it necessary to declare in solemn words what had been up to that time the firm faith of the Church Catholic. Such solemn declarations are the decrees of Councils in the Church, held age after age, each bearing witness to the unchanged teaching of the Spouse of Christ. That teaching can be easily ascertained by any one capable of reading the decrees, all of which are unanimous, explicit and emphatic in declaring that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was true God and true man, the two natures united in one person.

c. It is for this faith that countless thousands of the best men and women, nay of innocent children, out of

whose mouth speaks so often divine wisdom, laid down their beautiful lives. The noblest, the wealthiest, the most gifted in every age and nation have freely avowed their belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and in that faith have taken upon themselves the burdens of a laborious life or an heroic death. Hence the multitude of our confessors, missionaries at home and abroad, the virgins of Christ devoted to every conceivable work of charity, with no reward and no earthly hope but the joy of serving their Master, who has preserved for them an incorruptible crown in heaven.

Conclusion.—Thank God, my brethren, that we belong, however unworthily, to that glorious band, that we have upon our hearts and foreheads the sign of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, in Whom is all our hope and a sure hope, for the Eternal God is true to His promises. But let us be mindful of the duty which accompanies our fellowship with the true sons of Christ, for it is a union with God who suffers nothing defiled to enter into His Kingdom. If we profess ourselves as believers in the Son of God, let us beware lest our words and actions give the lie to the faith we would profess. Let every man see in us children worthy of the divine companionship. Amen.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Epist. Philip IV, 4-7.
Gosp. John I, 19-28.

Subject.—*Our Preparation for Christmas.*

Text.—*Make straight the way of the Lord.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—We have on the last two Sundays dwelt upon the subject of our Redemption, and upon Him through

whom it was accomplished, Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

As we are nearing the holy day when we are to commemorate the mystery of the divine Incarnation, it is well to look into ourselves aud see how near or far away we stand from our dear model, our pattern of life from Bethlehem to Calvary.

Transition.—It is a journey on which each of us have been set to labor, to straighten it as did St. John the Baptist, for the coming of our divine Saviour into our hearts. How then do we straighten the way of the Lord that He may gain access to us and make His abode with us on Christmas-day, as He did in the chaste bosom of Mary Immaculate on her journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

We straighten the way of the Lord:

I. By putting down a measuring line;

II. By digging away the crooked embankments;

III. By gathering up the stones and smoothing the path with a roller.

First Point.—The surveyor measures a distance to find its *actual* length; then he calculates the straight distance which is the direct and shortest line.

We must do the same with our conscience, which is the way of the Lord to our heart. First, we *survey*, that is to say we examine all the turns which render our path to heaven so much more wearisome than need be, and rob us of our strength, thus delaying our happy meeting with Christ. The ways of the sinner are crooked, and self-examination of our hearts will reveal unto us that there is much sin.

The measuring line you will find in your prayer-books if you attentively read the table of sins attached to the preparation for a good confession.

Second Point.—When you have carefully taken your measure and compared it with the way of the Lord as marked out in the commandments He has given to us for

our guidance, then comes the digging away of crookedness and obstructions.

Many Christians take the first step. They examine, find out their faults, confess them and feel a certain satisfaction in having received absolution. But they fall soon again. Why? Because they have omitted the digging. They say to themselves—well I know now what is wrong in my way, and I shall carefully avoid the stumbling over these embankments. It is a mistake. In the first place you are only walking round them, and that wearies you. Then it is often cloudy or hot or dark, and being weak with useless long walking you stumble in spite of yourself, that is, you fall into sin despite your knowledge of yourself and your resolution to avoid the pitfalls and obstructions.

There is only one really efficient way for a man who has faced his sins by an honest examination, and knows what is wrong in his way of life—and that is to take a spade and dig hard in the sweat of his brow, to remove the difficulties. He need not wait until the priest gives him the absolution and penance. Penances are often but temporary punishments for sin, to help us recognize and remember where our habitual faults and temptations lie, and to indicate the way by which we are to overcome a settled evil habit. We must go to work vigorously without waiting for this direction, when we know what to do. Thus the person who feels that a certain self-indulgence keeps him from God, should make a bold resolution to stop the practice or remove from the occasion which induces it. It may be hard, but the Lord is there watching and He secretly helps him who has an honest will, so that by the grace of God we can remove even mountains of evil in a short time.

Third Point.—When the heavy work of removing occasions and habits of great sins, which costs us some sacrifice, has been accomplished, we may go at the lighter work of humiliations. We gather up the stones, that is we cultivate habits which prevent wilful venial sins; we smooth the path by smoothing down our temper, our outward manner

toward our brethren. The roller used for such purposes is the habit of prayer, regularity in attending Mass and divine service generally, order in our domestic duties and all the actions of the day which are to be performed for the honor and glory of God.

Conclusion.—Such is practically the manner in which we follow the example of St. John, in straightening the way for our Lord to us at Christmas. It will make our lives so much more happy and fruitful. Then, as the Apostle says in this day's Epistle: *the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Amen.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Epist. I Cor. IV, 1-5.
Gosp. Luke III, 1-6.

Subject.—*Preparing the Crib.* (*Preparation for Holy Communion.*)

Text.—*All flesh shall see the salvation of God.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—The holy season of Christmas is close at hand and it becomes an important matter that we be in touch with it. Last Sunday we considered the general preparation, the manner in which the crooked ways were to be made straight and smooth for the coming of our Lord; and to-day St. Luke almost repeats the words of the previous Gospel of St. John when he says, speaking as if it were now being actually accomplished: *Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways plain; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.* (Gospel.)

Transition.—There is a proximate preparation for the coming of our Lord. It is like strewing flowers, sweet scenting and fair to behold, in the pathway to Bethlehem, and bringing fine linen and a soft pillow to the crib where the divine Infant may rest; for we do not want Him to be bedded on hard straw in the cold stable where He was bound to be on the first Christmas, long ago, among the inhospitable people of Bethlehem.

We mean to receive Him in a warm and clean heart, to offer our affections purified by a good confession, as a cradle for Him to lie in when we receive Holy Communion on Christmas morning; and our preparation of this crib shall be the preparation for a worthy Holy Communion.

The crib into which we shall invite our Lord is to be

I. Of precious material;

II. Beautiful form;

III. Lined with fine linen and silk.

First Point.—The most precious materials of which we can construct a cradle for our Lord are gold and silver. These metals, to become perfectly purified, are proved in a crucible by fire. Every foreign substance is thus taken out of the composition.

The crucible is the confessional where every heart has to prove itself true to God before approaching holy Communion. *Let a man prove himself*, says St. Paul (I Cor. xi, 28, 29), *and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of the Chalice, for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord.* We saw last Sunday how to prepare for this confession by a good examination of conscience and by removing the crooked ways which are our evil habits and wilful temptations. It is now our duty to make "a clean breast of it," as they say, by a sincere and complete confession with a practical purpose of amendment.

Second Point.—In working out a design in solid and precious material the goldsmith is careful to trace the figures beforehand and to polish the metal when he has cast or chiseled out the form. Then he saves anxiously all the little particles that may fall to the ground, for they are precious in themselves.

In a similar manner, we who wish to construct a cradle for our Lord in our hearts, must trace the figures that are to grace it beforehand. We must prepare for holy Communion by devout reading, prayer and fasting. We must also attend to the outward polish, so as to be clean and tidy in our dress and body when we approach the Holy Table. And thirdly we are to gather carefully all the precious particles which remain, that is to say we are to make a careful thanksgiving after holy Communion. (Suggest time and manner of doing this.)

Third Point.—Then there are special acts of devotion which we should observe, not only on the morning of receiving the Lord, but all about the time of His remaining in us. Place fine linen in the cradle of your heart, by the purity which you observe in your contact with your surroundings. Let silk and satin of shining and strong virtue, precious in the sight of the Lord, be the result of His dwelling within you. Visit the Church again and again, renewing your fervor and keeping the Infant Saviour with you by Spiritual Communion and prayer, which is to Him like a sweet cradle song in harmony with the chant of the angels who first announced His presence to the shepherds.

Conclusion.—Exhortation to all to prepare at once for the worthy reception of holy Communion on Christmas morning. Amen.

CHRISTMAS.

Epist. Tit. III, 4-7,
Gosp. Luke II, 15-20.

Subject.—*The Docility of the Shepherds.*

Text.—*The Shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—This holy feast is a day of joy and gratitude throughout Christendom, because on it we commemorate the good tidings first announced by the angels of Bethlehem: *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy; for this day is born to you a Saviour.* (St. Luke ii, 10, 11).

Transition.—The manner in which the shepherds received this gladsome news suggests to us the spirit in which we are to receive the mystery of the coming of Christ. They must have been good men, these shepherd folk of Judea, busy about their duty and watchful over their flocks. When the divine message came to them, they accepted it in all simplicity, and without delay acted upon the message they had received in perfect trust.

I. They believed without hesitation;
II. Admonished each other to go in search of the holy Infant;
III. They were grateful for the blessing of revelation.

First Point.—When they speak of the event which had just occurred, there is no hesitation as to their accepting *this word which has come to pass*, and *which the Lord has showed*, to them as if it were a fact that admits of neither question nor doubt.

(Contrast with this the weakness of our faith regarding divine revelation, of which we have evidence equally as strong as that of the shepherds. Animate your hearers to a lively faith in the mysteries of our holy religion.)

Second Point.—*The shepherds said to one another: Let us go, and let us see.* They animate each other to a practical zeal in seeking for the truth. (Dwell on zeal for the salvation of our brethren in leading them toward the source of truth.)

Third Point.—If there be one virtue which more than another insures a continuance of the divine blessing in our lives it is gratitude for favors received. We learn this in many ways from the teaching of the Sacred Scriptures and the examples of the saints. St. Paul continually inculcates the sentiment of gratitude upon the new converts in the early Church. *We ought*, he writes to the Thessalonians (II. Thess. i, 3), *to give thanks always to God, as is meet, because your faith increaseth exceedingly; and the charity of every one of you towards each other aboundeth.* And again to the Colossians, as in many other places, he says: *All whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.* (Col. iii, 17.)

Now it is this virtue which the Gospel notes as a special feature of the docility with which the shepherds received the announcement of the divine message regarding the new-born Babe. They not only listened to the voice of God, they not only encouraged each other to fulfill the bidding of the angel inviting them to search the Saviour, but when they had found Him they were mindful of the gratitude they owed for so great a blessing. *And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen as it was told unto them.*

From their action we learn to be mindful of the grace of our vocation as Christians; for, like to the shepherds in the Gospel, we too have been invited to hear the glorious message and see its fulfillment. *Let the peace of Christ, therefore, rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body, and be ye thankful* (Col. iii, 15), says the Apostle.

Conclusion.—As we kneel at the foot of the altar, or before

the image of the crib wherein the holy Infant lies to receive our petitions and to bless us, with Its little omnipotent hands let us renew our faith and our gratitude. Let us resolve to receive with a like docility all the teachings and admonitions of our holy Church, because she is the bearer of His message to us, as the angels were unto the humble keepers of their flocks in the valley of Bethlehem on the first Christmas night. Amen.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS.

Epist. Gal. IV. 1-7.
Gosp. Luke II, 33-40.

Subject. – *The open profession of our faith.*

Text.—*Now she, at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel.* (Gospel.)

Introduction.—Among those to whom our Lord revealed Himself first in the days of His holy Infancy were the venerable priest St. Simeon, and the holy widow St. Anna, daughter of Phanuel. They had received an inward warning from the Holy Ghost that this Child, so humbly born, so helpless and poor in the world's regard and goods was in reality the Messiah promised for ages past to the chosen people of Israel. Both had sufficient reason to keep their knowledge to themselves, for it seemed to outward appearance so unlikely that the Babe which Mary and Joseph brought to the temple could be the eternal God made man. In the case of Anna, especially, it might look like presumption to speak of her conviction to others, because she was old and feeble, and not unlikely to become the subject of ridicule with those who would treat her words as coming from a superstitious and weak-minded person.

Second Point.—*The shepherds said to one another: Let us go, and let us see.* They animate each other to a practical zeal in seeking for the truth. (Dwell on zeal for the salvation of our brethren in leading them toward the source of truth.)

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But the Evangelist, who omits much of what must have taken place in those days regarding the Saviour, is explicit in stating, that she confessed Him as the Messiah, *and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel.*

Transition.—From this we learn the wisdom of professing our religious convictions—

I. With noble courage ; and, at the same time,
II. With edifying regard for the position of those who are ignorant of our faith.

First Point.—It is a first principle of loyalty that a citizen be proud of his country, that a soldier be a courageous defender of his flag, that a servant be the champion of his honorable master. We despise a man who is ashamed of the convictions to which he has pledged himself as a member of any society, and who hesitates to acknowledge the friend in public from whom he receives benefits in private. The same holds good of the Christian who has received and accepted the livery of Jesus Christ. *He that shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him the Son of man shall be ashamed when He shall come in His majesty and that of His Father and of the holy angels.* (St. Luke ix, 26.)

We can readily imagine how the learned and wealthy Pharisees may have scoffed at the idea of holy Simeon inviting them to honor the divine Infant in the arms of the lowly Virgin Mother, who had not even a home or a decent cradle for her little One. On the other hand we find the three kings bend their knees before this same Babe, for the divine light which shone upon them gave them the grace of a deeper faith than many a Scribe of the Jewish synagogue could claim.

The same difference exists among Christians of to-day. Many avow their belief in the Catholic doctrine in private, yet would hesitate through a worldly motive of prudence to profess that faith openly by any distinctive sign marking their Catholicity before others. It is not enough to have an

inward conviction of a truth if we fail to speak it out through, human respect, where it might do good to be bold. *With the heart*, writes St. Paul to the fastidious Romans, *we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* (Rom. x, 10.)

If, in a company of strangers, a person spoke ill of us, and a friend of ours were standing by and listening to it without defending us, when he knew that what was said of us was false—would we easily forgive him?

St. John tells us that in the days of Christ there were *many of the chief men* who *believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.* (St. John, xii, 42.)

Second Point.—But whilst we must ever display a noble courage in confessing the faith of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must also *look to the manner in which we do this, so as to edify.*

We sometimes meet with persons who by their inconsiderate defense of a good principle or of a person whom they esteem, do more harm to the truth or to their friend than good.

The Gospel tells us of Anna that she spoke of the Saviour, but it wisely adds the words *to all that looked for the redemption of Israel.* In other words, she did not expose the sacred mystery of the Incarnation to the scoffs and scorn of those who had no conception of its meaning.

Our duty lies in a like direction. We are to profess our faith at all times and in all places, even in public, when it is required of us as a test of choosing between God's truth and the sacrifice to idols or worldly considerations under whatever name. Such were the professions of faith which we read of in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Acts of the Martyrs. We are also bound to profess our faith wherever there is no actual danger of exposing that which is holy to public ridicule.

And here let me say that we are often overmuch prudish in hiding our Catholic faith from strangers, when the ordi-

nary circumstances of life naturally call for its exercise or profession. We are at times inclined to omit, through mere human respect, the sign of the cross or our prayer at table, we omit the recital of the Angelus, we hide our medal of the Blessed Virgin and the like—and all this in our own houses or where we have a perfect right to have our own way without scandalizing anybody.

This is wrong, for we have every reason to be proud of our faith. There are, moreover, few persons who fail to respect a consistent Catholic because of the outward exercise of his faith, when this is done with that gravity and simplicity which both befits religion and indicates a deep conviction. Such manifestation of religious faith often begets inquiry, and leads the stranger who perhaps *looks for the redemption of Israel*, to find that true religion of Jesus Christ of which we happily and by the superabundant grace of God are the unworthy heirs.

Conclusion.—*Take unto you, then, the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day. In all things taking the shield of faith wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery arts of the most wicked one.* (Eph. vi, 13-16.) For, as the Saviour whom we adore at this holy season in the humble stable of Bethlehem, has said: *Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.* (St. Matt. x, 32.) Amen.

NOTES AND EXAMPLES FOR THE PREACHER AND CATECHIST.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION.

We read in the life of St. Margaret, princess of Hungary, that she spent the day before receiving Holy Communion in complete retirement from all distraction, taking only bread and water for her nourishment. In the evening, until late at night, she remained in the chapel before the Blessed

Sacrament ; and on the day itself, when she approached the Holy Table, she tasted nothing until sundown in order to retain in herself the taste of the Bread of Angels. (*Lohner Bibl. i*, 338.)

IN the Annals of the Missions, A. D. 1586, it is related that the converts to Christianity in India celebrated the day of their holy Communion as a solemn family feast. When a child made its first holy Communion the house was carefully cleaned and garnished; one room would be set apart and decorated with garlands and flowers, the mother of the household would receive the child on its return from the church, salute it as the bearer of the Blessed Sacrament, and lead it into the festive chamber, there to ask favors and blessings upon the home and for each of its members. For years this day of honor was kept, just as we celebrate the days of our birth or betrothal. (*Ibid. i*, 340.)

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES writes in one of his letters: "An experience of 23 years, which I have spent in the care of souls has convinced me, beyond a doubt, that there is a wondrous power in the reception of the Holy Eucharist, which strengthens the soul in its good resolutions, averts misfortune, consoles, elevates and renders man more and more like to his divine Model, provided the soul be prepared for the heavenly banquet by a lively faith, by purity and sincere devotion. (*S. Franc., L. ii, ep.*, 41.)

P. VEITH relates the following incident in the life of St. Louis of France, which illustrates both the virtue of the Blessed Sacrament and the reverence its worthy reception

inspires in a stranger. Whilst the king was prisoner in the hands of the Sultan of Soria, he frequently received the holy Communion from the hands of a priest who had joined him in his captivity. The meekness and gentleness, together with every other manly virtue in the royal prisoner so affected the sultan that he began greatly to admire the devout habits of the Christian prince. When he was told that the secret of the serenity of his captive, amid much that was trying, lay in the Blessed Eucharist of which the latter partook with scrupulous devotion, the Mussulman offered the King to release him on the single condition that he would leave him one of the consecrated Hosts given to the prince by the Christian priest. (*Veith's "Our Father,"* p. 214.)

ST. CYPRIAN tells the following of which he was an eye-witness. One day, during the persecution of the Christians, when he was celebrating the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, a beautiful young woman approached the holy Communion. As soon as she had received it she began to tremble violently and fell pale to the ground. When the bystanders carried out the dead body, it was learned that she had been employed as a spy by the persecutors to watch and betray the Christians who attended the secret worship. To hide her false purpose she received the Blessed Sacrament—to her own destruction, because unworthily.

PRACTICAL CHARITY.

St. Frances de Chantal was very anxious to have her daughters grow in Christian charity. To effect this by constant practice, yet without many words, she had the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians written in large letters upon the wall of a corridor. The words are: *Charity is patient, is kind, envieth not, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, beareth*

all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (I Cor. xiii.) Whenever anyone in the house was guilty of a breach of charity, she would send the offender to the place, and ask her to read what was there written. She used to call that wall the common looking-glass of the house.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER frequently called the Society of Jesus, to which he belonged: "An association for the love of our neighbor."

"WOULD you be a wise merchant, a clever business man?" asks St. Augustine. "Then give to the poor that which you cannot possibly retain for yourself beyond a few years, and receive in exchange that which you cannot lose in all eternity. For a little you receive a hundredfold. For a temporal good—an eternal inheritance."

ST. POLYCARP went, as we read in his life described by the historian Eusebius, to meet those who were in search of him to bring him as a condemned Christian before the Pagan tribunal. He told them that he would help them to find the accused man, whom the officers did not recognize. Then he led them to the house where he stayed, showed them every hospitality and left them to prepare for death. When he returned he told them with smiling conntenance, that he was ready to go with them, for that he was the prisoner whom they sought. (*Euseb. hist. eccl. l.* iv.)

IN the city of Bologna, in Italy, there is a street called *La strada pia* (street of charity). It is related that it obtained the name from the following fact. In one of the palaces on this street there lived a noble lady, a widow, who had an only child. One day the little boy was playing before

the house when a half drunken soldier, who passed by, began to tease the child. In the course of his rude jests the unfortunate man caused the boy to fall, so that the point of his sword pierced it in a vital part. In a short time the boy bled to death, and the frantic soldier, recognizing his crime and fearing the penalty, ran into the open house near by to hide himself. Shortly afterward the officers of justice came to search for the criminal at the house of the mother, who had not yet been informed that the victim of his drunken folly was her own child. Learning that the man had committed a murder without intending it, she felt it instinctively her Christian duty to shield him. When they tell her that the dead body without is that of her own son—she staggers pale as death into her oratory, casts herself at the feet of her crucifix and cries out: "My God, hast Thou permitted this? Thy holy will be done. Yet I will not that two lives be sacrificed for one. If for love of Thee I hoped to shield the senseless murderer who knew not what he did, shall self-love prevail upon me to have my child avenged?"—Then turning to the officers of the law she besought them to go and not disturb the house of death in search of the murderer—until later. Her wish prevailed, and she aided the poor soldier, heartsore and changed from that hour into a penitent, to make his escape.

INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS.

ST. JEROME speaking of the monastic institutions of the East says, that their rules obliged each member to be continually occupied with some work—not because it was always necessary or even useful to the community, but because it preserved their minds from dangerous temptations, which come as a consequence of idleness."

DOROTHEUS, an Egyptian monk, was remarkable for his assiduity in choosing the hardest labor for himself, and not

ceasing from it until late at night. One day a man asked him why he plagued his poor body so severely, since there was no necessity for doing so much work. He simply answered: "I am obliged to plague my body by hard work, because otherwise it will plague me by subjecting me to temptation and sin."

IDLENESS is a nest wherein malice is hedged. (*St. Chrysost. Hom. 16.*)

IDLENESS is the mother of poverty and the root of despair. (*Id. L. de Lapsis*).

AS THE soil when it is not turned over produces only weeds and briars; and as a water which does not run becomes stagnant and produces malarial gases—so idleness brings forth sins and vices.

RUST eats away the strongest steel, whilst frequent use preserves the metal. In the same way idleness devours gradually the strength of the soul, whilst use and friction keep it in good order and brightness.

THE SCIENCE OF DEATH.

THE celebrated Alcuin, teacher and friend of Charlemagne, retired during the last years of his life to a solitude near Tours. When asked why he abandoned those to whom he had been accustomed to give the benefit of his learning freely, he answered: "I go to study for myself the most difficult of all sciences, namely, that of dying a blessed death." This he did: for four years he visited daily the place where he was buried, and there meditated upon the vanity of all

human glory and enjoyment. He died a beautiful and edifying death on May 19, 804.

THE Emperor Charles V, one of the most powerful emperors in the sixteenth century, resigned the royal responsibility and pomp to his son Philip, and retired to a convent, there to prepare for death. Having lived for so many years amidst the surroundings of magnificence and honor, he found it hard to enter upon the solemn reality of the fact, that he would one day be the food of worms. Hence he had all the preparations made for his funeral, placed himself in the coffin and witnessed the scenes that would be carried on one day about his own corpse. This so impressed him that for the two years of life which still remained to him on earth, he never lost the consciousness of the final act which was to bring him face to face with his Judge.

THE CONFESSIONAL.

ORIGEN SAYS:—"We feel oppressed and are easily affected by disease whenever the stomach is overladen with too much food, or with such as hurts the system. But as soon as we have cast it off, together with the noxious acids generated by it in the stomach, we experience great relief. It is the same with the sins which we conceal in our hearts. They oppress us and endanger our health of mind and body. But the moment we make an open confession and pour them forth at the foot of Christ's representative, we obtain great relief and peace of mind. (*Homil. II* in Ps. 38.)

WHEN you tell your dream it is a sign that you are no longer dreaming but awake. So when you confess your sins in sorrow, it is an evidence that you are awakening from the slumber of guilt. (*Seneca Ep.* liv, iv.)

THERE lived in Rome, during pagan times, an eccentric citizen Neratius, who frequently took it into his head to strike in the face a person passing by him. According to the law, a man striking another was bound to pay the injured party a certain sum of money as penalty for the offense. Neratius, who was very wealthy, never failed to pay, but continued to make the Roman streets unsafe by his quarrelsome freak, until a complaint was made to the Senate. Subsequently the law was changed and offenders like Neratius were beaten with rods. Then the eccentric man became a peaceful citizen.

Many sinners are like this eccentric Roman. They admit their sins in the confessional; they pay the prescribed penalty by performing a given penance; but they do not change their course, because they like the old way. To such, a law which makes them feel the mortification of their own injury is the only efficient correction.

HONOR TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

There exists in Catholic countries a beautiful custom of accompanying the Blessed Sacrament whenever it is being carried by the priests to the sick. Kings and princes, magistrates and officers, bend their knees, openly in the streets, before the King of heaven and earth, hidden under the eucharistic species.

It is related of the Dauphin, father to the unfortunate King Charles X., that at one time, on the feast of Corpus Christi, he announced his intention of accompanying the procession of the Blessed Sacrament with his body guard and soldiers. When the time for the procession arrived the sky looked dark and threatened rain, which fact caused some of the officers to persuade the prince to remain at home: "O, no," answered the noble sovereign, "you my brave officers and men have never shrunk from facing a storm of cannon-balls in battle to defend your earthly king; shall we then hesitate to face a few drops of water, when there is question of showing honor to the King of kings?"

CHRISTIAN FORGIVENESS.

In the ancient Church there existed a custom of which we find a record in one of the liturgies belonging to the third century. At the solemn Mass it was the practice of the priest, as it is to-day, after the *Agnus Dei*, to give the kiss of peace to the Deacon of the Mass. The latter then ascended the pulpit, and announced in a loud voice, that all the faithful present in the church, who had any enmity or unkind feeling in their hearts, should then and there make an act of sorrow and resolve to lay aside all hostility and strife. He then gave to the first lay man the kiss of peace which he passed to his brethren in turn.

It is related of the devout Peter Fourrier, who was pastor in the town of Montaincour, that he had in his parish a man who bitterly hated him, because the good priest had reproved the openly sinful and scandalous life which this person led. One day, as the priest was leaving the church, the malicious man waylaid and beat him unmercifully. A person who had witnessed the assault quickly made it known to the parishioners, a large number of whom set out in search of the villain, for the purpose of summarily punishing him. When the good Father heard of this, he begged them to desist, and finding that the party had already set out on their way, he dragged himself to the church and rang the large bell which always served as an alarm to the parish whenever an accident had occurred and which was to bring them together. When the crowd had collected before the church and the pursuers had returned on hearing the sudden warning, the priest brought them into the church and from the altar invited them to pray for the conversion of a man who was in danger of losing his soul. The man was the one who had maltreated the priest.

The prayer of the people and the magnanimous conduct of the venerable priest, who thus saved his enemy from perhaps serious injury, so acted upon the heart of the wrongdoer that on the next day he came to the saintly Peter Fourrier, asked his pardon and led an edifying life in the parish to his end.

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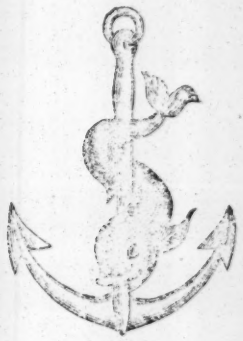

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This paper, which deals with the principles of the formation and right use of a private library, is to be followed by a List of Works in the different branches of ecclesiastical culture.

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scope and particular merit of each work

contained in the List. Thus the student is enabled to form in advance an estimate regarding the value of the works which he may select for his own use. The List includes, *principally*, English and Latin works; where these do not suffice to cover the ground, foreign books (German and French) and, in some cases, important publications by non-Catholics.

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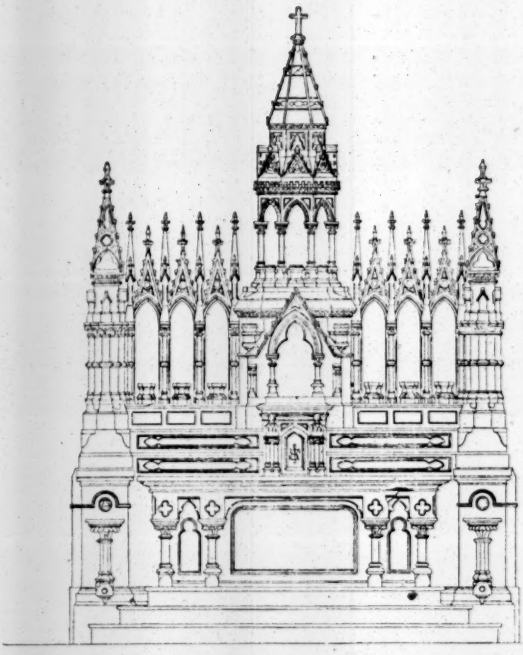
To these lists will be added such suggestions from specialists, on reading in the different branches of the ecclesiastical disciplines, as may be called forth during the course of publication.



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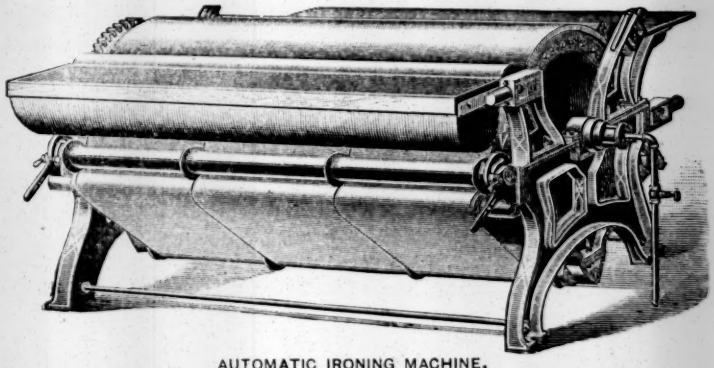

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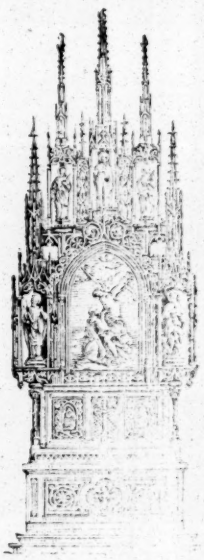

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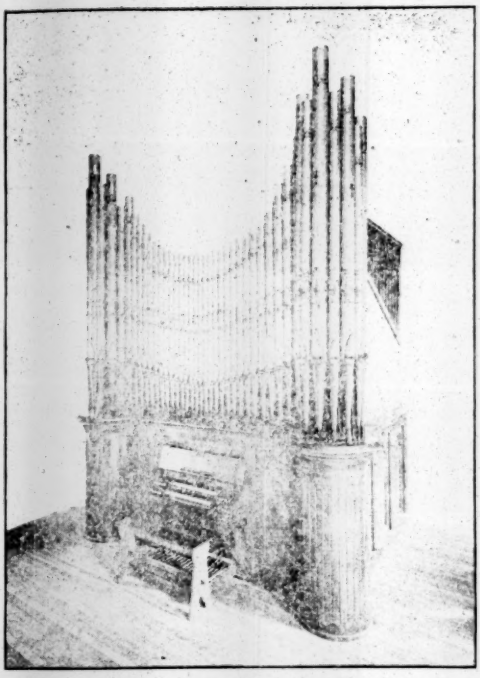

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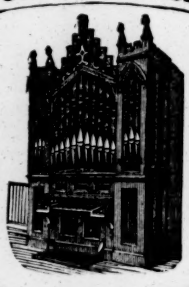

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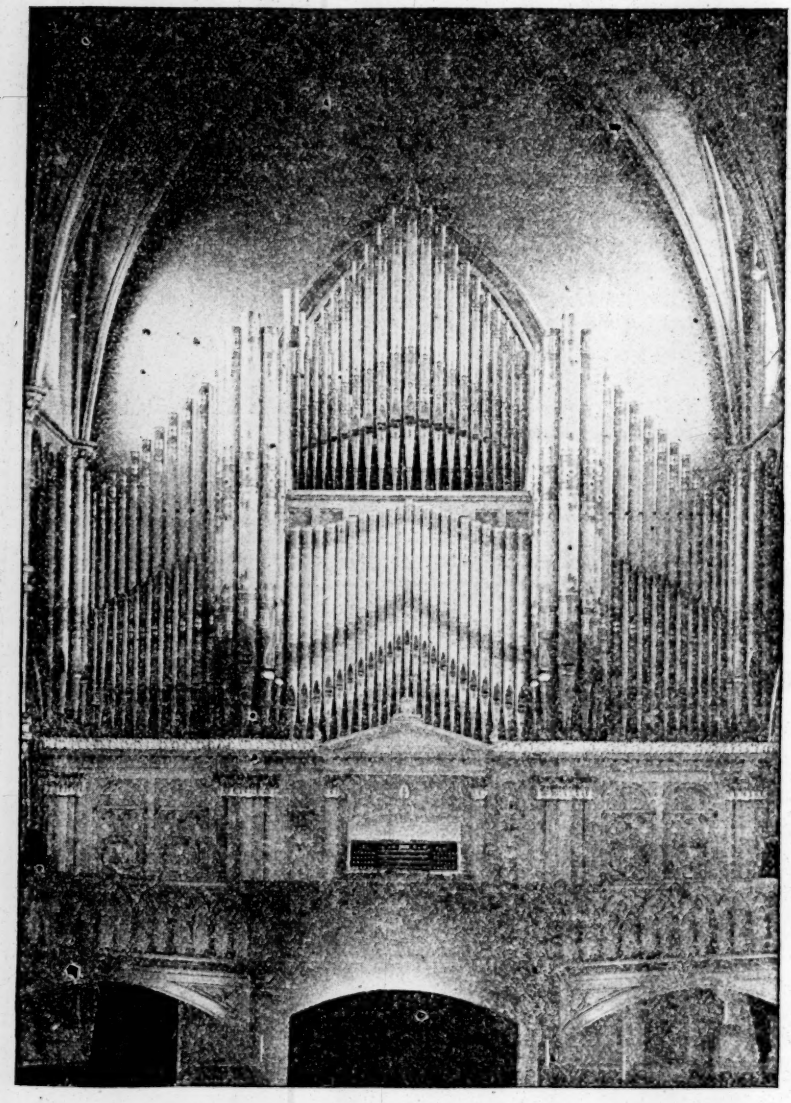

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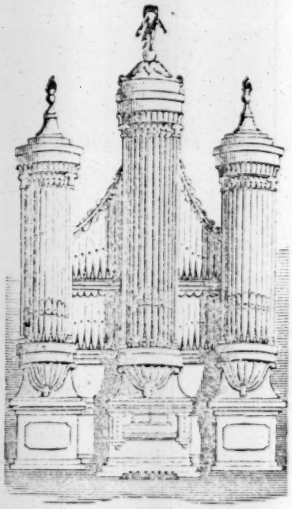

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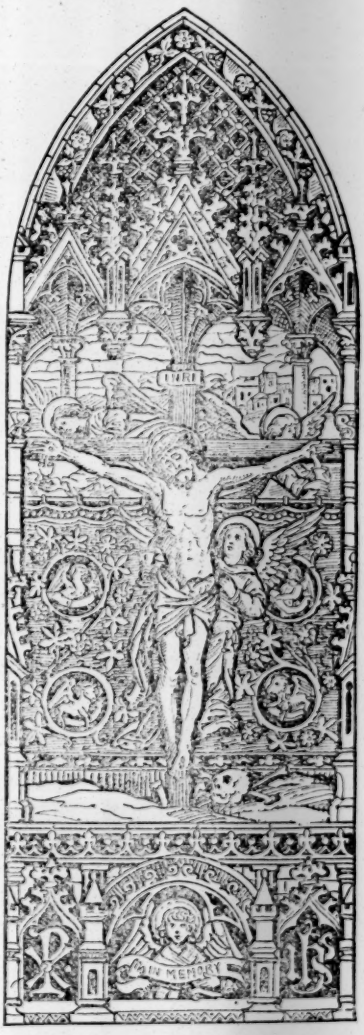

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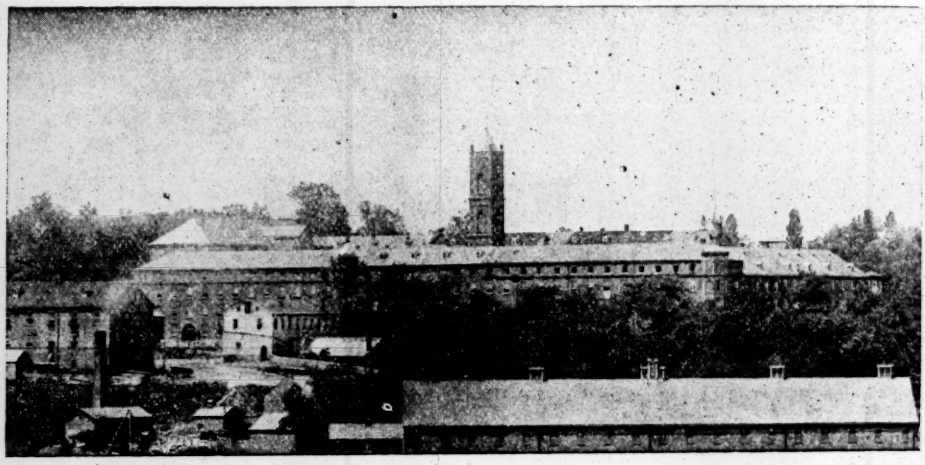

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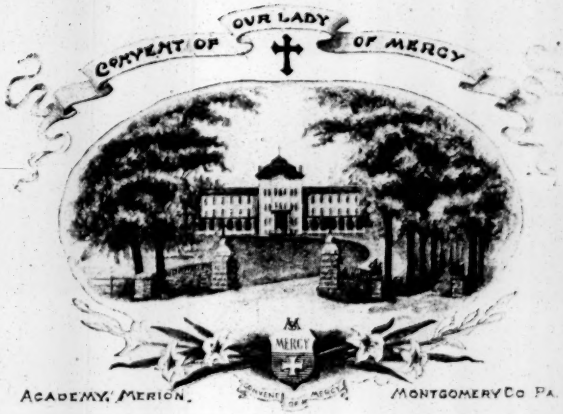

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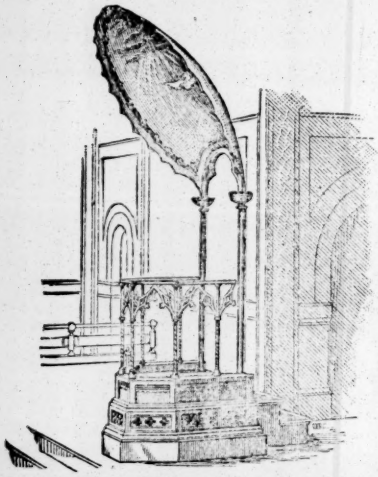

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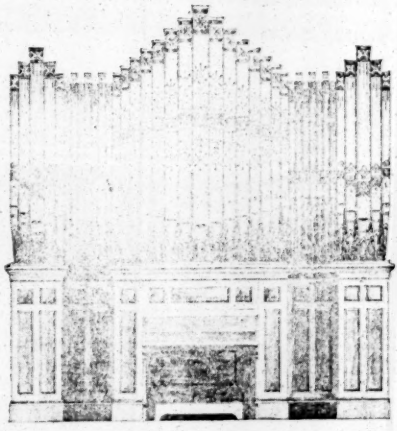

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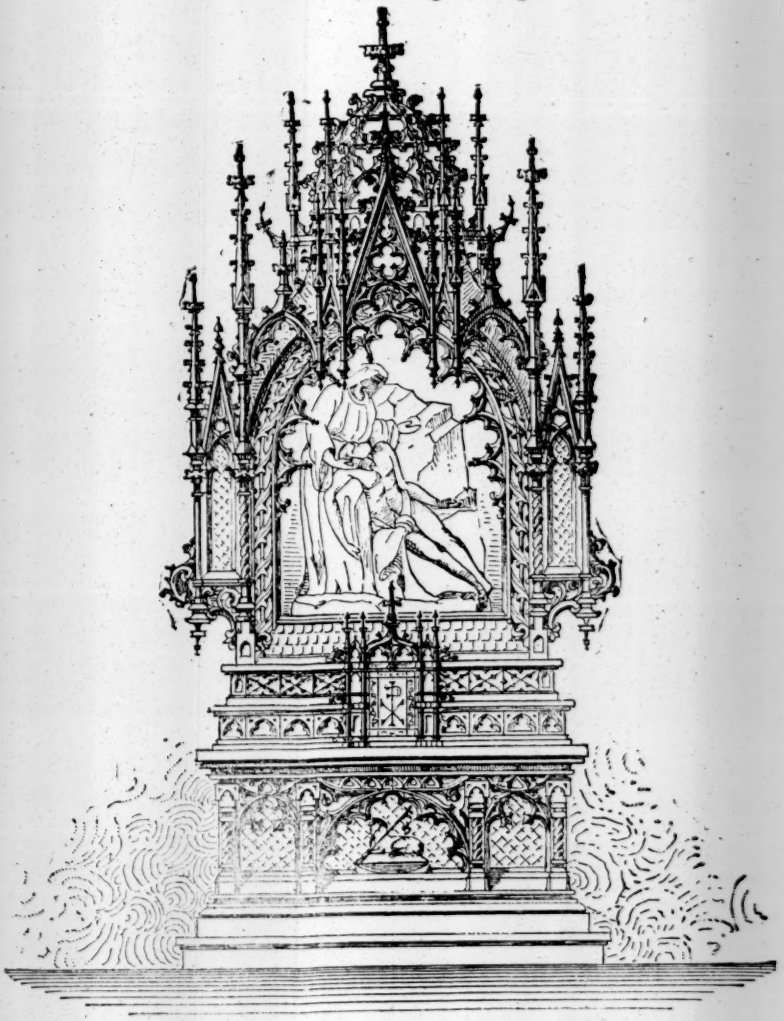

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